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AUGUST STRINDBERG

A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX

By
AXEL JOHAN UPPVALL



BOSTON
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TO
William Blake Wood, Esquire
OF ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS
NOBLE FRIEND AND GENEROUS BENEFACTOR
THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE*

This dissertation represents an effort on the part of the writer to approach Strindberg's exceedingly complex personality from a psychoanalytic point of view.

It claims, of course, none of that excellence, originality and completeness characteristic of the works of Freud (22), Abraham (2), Hitschmann (32), Jones (35), Pfister (44), Sadger (51), Sperber (54), Zoepf (79) and others. Compared with them it is a mere statement of a few but fundamentally important facts, upon the basis of which a complete analysis may be achieved.

While the writer is in no sense so entirely committed to any one of the psychoanalytic theories as to be blind to the merits of the others, even a casual perusal of this analysis will show that it has been worked out mainly along Freudian lines. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the writer accepts the most radical Freudian teachings with reference to sex, such as this, for instance, that

Whoever would be really free and, therefore, happy in his love-life, must needs give up respect for women and adapt himself to the idea of incest with mother and sister.¹

On the contrary, the writer has in the course of his study of the New Psychology become more and more convinced of the truth expressed by Jung and repeatedly emphasized by President Hall in his inspiring lectures on Psychoanalysis, The Psychology of War, Glandular Psychology (Pawlow) and the Psychology of Nutrition (Turró) that the theories of Freud and Adler are exceedingly one-sided, neither one of them being of sufficient scope and flexibility to do justice to the almost numberless and tantalizingly complex problems of psychic life.

An analysis of Strindberg, or of any other individual for that matter, would, therefore, in order to be able to claim at least approximate completeness and validity, have to transcend the

*Refer to bibliography at end of article for numerical and page references.

¹Beiträge zur Psychologie des Liebesleben. Jahrb. f. psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen. Bd. IV, Heft I, p. 46.

comparatively narrow limits of the Freudian Theory of Sex (now somewhat invalidated through the results of the study of shell-shock and war psychoses in general), the strictly personal Unconscious, and the Adlerian *Ichtrieb* and explore the immeasurably greater realm of the Collective or Absolute Unconscious postulated by Jung, a concept which, roughly speaking, corresponds to the Race or Folk-Soul of G. Stanley Hall. This would be to attack the problem from the truly genetic point of view. For, as Jung says (36):

The contents of the Absolute Unconscious are not merely the residue of archaic human functions, but also the residue of functions of the animal ancestry of mankind, whose duration of life was indeed vastly greater than the relatively brief epoch of specifically human existence.

Yet with the full knowledge of the many objections raised against the Freudian Theory, the writer has chosen to apply its fundamental principles to Strindberg. The main reasons for this may be stated as follows: First of all, Freud's Theory is still the foundation of all psychoanalysis. Secondly, its simplicity as compared with the anagogic interpretation of psychic phenomena by Jung, Silberer², Maeder³, and others, naturally appeals strongly to the inexperienced analyst.

And finally, the sexual element in Strindberg seemed—and still seems—to the writer so conspicuous, to such extent is the great Swedish Author a Freudian-Adlerian type, that no one could justly be accused of being biassed in favor of the School of Vienna for applying its principles to him in an attempt to interpret his unconscious motivations—the very woof and web of his almost tragic existence—in terms of the Oedipus Complex.

The writer wishes to take this opportunity to express his deep gratitude to all who have in any way facilitated his work. He is especially indebted to Karl Johan Karlson, Ph.D., Professor William H. Burnham, Ph.D., and above all to his chief instructor,

²Silberer, Herbert

Problems of Mysticism and its Symbolism. Transl. by S. E. Jelliffe, New York, Moffat Yard Co., 1917. 451 p.

³Maeder, Alphonse E.

Guérison et Evolution dans la vie de l'ame, etc. Zürich, Rascher, 1918. 69 p.

President G. Stanley Hall, Ph.D., LL.D., for his unfailing kindness, constructive criticism and helpful suggestions in the preparation of this dissertation, which, had it not been for his guidance and encouragement, would never have seen the light of day.

AUGUST STRINDBERG*

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I

*Ich liebe sie, liebe sie, so wie sie sich mir beim Abschied
offenbart hat; und die Erinnerung an die ersten Tage
unserer Verbindung steigt in mir auf, wie sie, Weib und
Mutter zugleich, sanft und zärtlich mich wie ein kleines Kind
liebkost und hatschelt.*

*Und so liebe ich, begehre sie glühend zum Weibe.
Ist das ein widernatürlicher Trieb? Bin ich das Pro-
dukt eines Naturspiels? Sind meine Gerfühle entartet, weil
ich ja meine Mutter besitze? Ist das unbewusste Blutschande
des Herzens?*

Die Beichte eines Thoren.

JOHAN August Strindberg was born in Stockholm, January 22, 1849, as the fourth son of Oscar Strindberg, a merchant and shipping agent, and Ulrika Eleonora née Norling. The marriage of the parents had been legalized but a short time before the birth of the boy, and according to his own opinion, he was not a welcome addition to the family. At the age of five he was sent to the kindergarten. From there he passed to the elementary schools and entered the Lyceum in 1861. In 1862 he lost his mother and the following year he entered the Gymnasium, was confirmed in 1864 and graduated from the Gymnasium in 1867 at the age of eighteen.

In the fall of the same year he went to the University of Uppsala, but remained there only one term, partly because of lack of funds and partly because of the slow pedantic methods which were distasteful to his impatient, critical and neurotic nature. Returning to the capital he secured a position as teacher in Clara School, where he had formerly been a student. Soon discovering that he had missed his calling, he decided to study medicine. But finding this even as little to his taste as school teaching and feeling the creative artist stirring within his soul, he turned his attention to histrionic arts. After six months of the most ener-

*A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Clark University, Worcester, Mass., in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and accepted on the recommendation of G. Stanley Hall.

getic preparations, unspeakable turmoil of soul, and dreams of fame he made his début at the Dramatic Theatre in Björnson's *Maria Stuart* with one solitary line to recite. This was in 1869. It was an insult to him and two months later he demanded to be heard in a classical role. He was granted a trial, but failed, and was advised to enter the school of dramatic acting. To him who had felt since early childhood that he was ever being held back, this was an unbearable blow and he went home fully determined to take his own life. To this end he swallowed an opium tablet, but a friend who happened to call persuaded Strindberg to go out with him. He did so and in a night of revelries he drowned his sorrow and escaped the effects of the poison.

The following day was a memorable one for the young poet. The strained relations with his father and stepmother had long weighed heavily upon him and while lying on the sofa in his room he tried to devise a scheme through the instrumentality of which his stepmother might reconcile him with his father. In two hours he had visualized a comedy in two acts, and in four days the play was complete. It was refused but he felt that his honor was saved, inasmuch as it drew some compliments from the theatrical authorities.

He was now seized with a veritable passion for writing and in less than two months he had completed two comedies and a tragedy called *Hermione*. The latter was later accepted and played. It was now suggested to him that since he had given evidence of the powers of literary creation he should return to Uppsala and read for a degree, since literary success depended very largely upon such an education.

But his second term at the University was largely spent in the company of his friends and at the "Runa" Club, and devoted, not to his academic studies, but to the writing of plays. The play called *In Rome* was then produced and sent to the Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, where it was accepted and played in August 1870. Shortly after, he produced *The Outlaw*, in which he showed, for the first time, real originality and exceptional powers. This play was also accepted and performed at the Royal Theatre in the fall of 1871.

In the fall of that year he returned to the University after a violent quarrel with his father, without a dollar in his pocket, and no prospects of obtaining any funds. But fortune favored the brave, almost despairing young author. King Charles XV had been present at the performance of *The Outlaw*, and the

Viking play had appealed to him to such an extent that he commanded the author to appear before him. Strindberg, after some hesitation, fearing foul play, put in appearance and was offered a scholarship of 800 Crowns per annum which was gratefully accepted.

Now he returned to Uppsala once more feeling somewhat elated and contented for the first time in his life. He took up his work in earnest. The year 1871 closed very favorably for him, for in addition to his recognition by the theatrical authorities and the king, he also became the recipient of honorable mention from the Swedish Academy on account of his Greek drama *Hermione*. But despite his success he soon began to chafe under the academic work, and when for some reason or other, the scholarship was withdrawn in the spring of 1872 he left Uppsala.

For a few months he tried to glean a living from newspaper work. But the creative impulse left him no rest and finally he bought a few quires of paper and started for Kymmendö, a small island in the Stockholm archipelago. Here in his twenty-third year he created his first masterpiece *Master Olof*. Highly deserving as it was, an epoch-making play from every point of view, it was refused by the theatrical authorities and was not produced until seven years later, in the year of 1880.

Again he had to resort to newspaper work and thus barely succeeded in keeping body and soul together. Then fortune smiled upon him once more. In 1874 he received an appointment as amanuensis in the Royal Library in Stockholm. Now he immediately plunged into the study of the Chinese language. A treatise which he wrote on the subject of some old manuscripts earned him medals from, and membership in, many learned societies, and recognition from the French Institute soon followed.

In the midst of all this good fortune he met his evil genius. He was introduced to and fell in love with Baroness Wrangel, née von Essen¹, whom he married on December 31, 1877. This new life revived in him the creative impulse and when he left Sweden in 1883 in a rather serious physical and mental condition, he had a score of recognized works to his credit, such as: *From Fjärdingen and Svartbäcken*, *The Red Room*, *From the Sea*, *Here and There*, *The Secret of the Guild*, *Sir Bengt's Wife*, *The Journey of Lucky Peter*, *Studies in the History of Culture*, *the Swedish People*, *The New Kingdom* and *Poems in Verse and Prose*.

¹Her full maiden name was Sophia Mathilda Elizabeth Von Essen. She is often referred to by writers as Siri, and in *The Fool's Confession* Strindberg speaks of her as Maria.

In France he joined a cosmopolitan group of painters at Grez par Nemours. During his stay abroad between the years of 1883 and 1889, residing alternately in France, French Switzerland, German Switzerland, Bavaria and Denmark, he published a number of famous works, the most important of which are: *Married*, *Real Utopias*, his *Autobiography* in four volumes, *The Father*, *Lady Julia* and *Comrades*.

In the year of 1889 Strindberg returned to Sweden with the intention of settling down permanently. But in 1892 he again turned his back to his native land. Ever since his stay in Switzerland the relations between himself and his wife had been unbearable. According to Uddgren (72 p. 154) a Swiss woman had forced herself between them and did not even leave them alone in Sweden. The result was that he sought divorce in January 1891. The history of this exceedingly unhappy union of fifteen years is related in *A Fool's Confession*, published in 1893. The divorce proceedings which followed and dissolved the marriage in 1892 are touchingly described in his drama *The Link*, published in 1897.

During the years of 1891-92 he led the life of a hermit on the island of Kymmendö where he wrote and painted a large number of canvases, which at the time received considerable attention and recognition. In the fall of the same year he started for Germany and settled down in Berlin where he delved into the study of the natural sciences.

His reception in Germany was extraordinary. Richard Dehmelt greeted him with a poem called *An Immortal*. In the shop windows his photograph hung alongside that of the Iron Chancellor, and his plays were on the répertoire of the foremost theatres all over the continent.

It was during this stay in Germany that Strindberg became the centre of attraction *Zum Schwarzen Ferkel*. This important period in Strindberg's life has been presented in a sympathetic manner by Dr. Schleich (53 p. 25 ff.) in his *Erinnerungen an Strindberg*.

It was in 1892 also that he met Frida Uhl, a young Austrian writer, to whom, after a great deal of hesitation, he was married in the spring of 1893.

The so called Inferno period, properly speaking, begins shortly after Strindberg's arrival in Berlin if, indeed, it may not be said to have begun earlier. Be that as it may, the spirit of William Blake had cast a spell over the whole of artistic Europe

and spiritism had been replaced by theosophy. Schleich (op. cit. p. 12 ff.) tells us that Strindberg, when he first met him, adhered to a mechanistic *Weltanschauung*, but adds that he was fast drifting towards mysticism and that he had already at that time (1892) developed demonological notions. The same authority also intimates that Strindberg at this time was already intimate with Swedenborg's *Arcana Coelestia*, Jacob Boehme and Paracelsus. To this period also belongs his play *To Damascus*, although it was not published until 1898.

After his marriage to Frida Uhl the couple went to England and settled down in Gravesend. Owing to the confiscation of *Die Beichte eines Thoren*, they had to return. Strindberg left his law suit in the hands of an attorney in Berlin and he and his wife went to her home in Ardagger near Armstädten on the Danube.

In the fall of 1894, after a few months' stay in Berlin, Strindberg and his wife left for Paris where he intended to study chemistry. Here the theatres were playing his dramas, and translations of his novels were being printed in various periodicals. No Swedish author had ever before achieved such success in the French capital where even Ibsen had been able to create but a moderate interest.

As though the surpassing of the great Norwegian dramatist had been Strindberg's only purpose, he now turned his back on his literary achievements and enormous success and shut himself up in the laboratories of the Sorbonne.

Deeply absorbed in his scientific experiments he now became oblivious of his young wife and secretly wished to be relieved of her. In November 1894 he accompanied her to Gare du Nord; ostensibly she was going home to care for their child who was ill, but in reality they parted for life. Shortly after this their marriage was dissolved.

In July 1896 Strindberg returned to Sweden after having passed through all the horrors so graphically described in his *Inferno*. At first he sought and obtained refuge in the home of a friend in Ystad, Dr. Eliason. About two months later he accepted an invitation to visit his Austrian parents-in-law and to see his little daughter. After a stay there of nearly three months he returned to Lund, Sweden, where he began the study of Swedenborg in earnest. The following year in May his mental equilibrium was so far restored that he could take up his literary work once more. On May 3, 1897 he began to write his *Inferno*

which was ready for publication on June 25th of the same year. Immediately upon the completion of this work he began his *Ledgens*, which work was published in 1898.

In the fall of 1897 he again visited Paris where he spent the winter, returning to Sweden in the spring of 1898.

His health was now completely restored and with the celebration of his fiftieth birthday his last and greatest creative period began. Between the years of 1898 and 1912, when he died, he produced between fifty and sixty different works, great historical plays, plays of realistic symbolism in a Swedenborgian spirit, sagas, poetry, novels, autobiographical works, dramaturgy, speeches, historical and philosophical essays.

From Lund he removed to Stockholm and in 1901 he married for the third time, a young Norwegian actress, Harriet Bosse. This marriage also ended in a divorce in the year of 1904.

In 1906 the so called Intima Teatern, under the direction of August Falk, began to present Strindbergian plays. They met with unqualified success. During the presentation of *Lady Julia* the other theatres in the capital were almost deserted.

Thus his recognition had come at last. About this time his name was the by-word of the entire Scandinavian North as well as that of continental Europe.

The following excerpt from a leading Stockholm periodical may truly be said to have voiced the sentiment of the nation (66, p. XX):

For over thirty years he has dissected us from every point of view; during that time his name has always been conspicuous in every book-shop window, and his books gradually pushed out the others from our shelves. Every night his plays are produced at the theatres; every conversation turns on him, and his is the name the pygmies quarrel over daily. The cry is heard that he has become hysterical, sentimental, out of his mind, but the next one knows he is robustness itself, and enduring beyond belief, despite great need, enmity, sorrow. One hour one is angry over some great extravagance which he has allowed himself, the next captivated by one of his plays, stirred, melted, strengthened and uplifted by his sublime genius.

On January 22, 1912, the Swedish nation celebrated Strindberg's sixty-third birthday. It was in the eleventh hour of his stormy existence. All the Stockholm theatres performed Strindbergian plays that night and gigantic torch-light processions filed past the Blue Tower. With bowed head and tears in his eyes he beheld the thronging multitudes and heard the deafening cheers,

which to him meant far more than either a literary Nobel prize or membership in the Swedish Academy. On the same occasion he received a purse of fifty thousand crowns from the Swedish people, but although he was practically penniless he gave the money to the poor.

On May 14, 1912, his eyes closed in death. His last wish was that the Bible and a Crucifix should accompany him on his last journey, that he should be buried during the early hours of the day and not among the wealthy.

Thus ended the pilgrimage of a man whose whole life had been devoted to the search for truth, of a soul that had doubted, blasphemed, despaired and suffered more intense psychic torments than most human beings, and who finally could write, with a fair amount of conviction (70, p. 293):

Pray but work, suffer but hope, keeping both the earth and the stars in view. Do not try to settle permanently, for it is a place of pilgrimage, not a home but a halting place. Seek truth for it is to be found, but only in Him, who Himself is "The Way, the Truth and the Life."

* * * *

The genealogy of the Strindberg family has been studied in detail by several authors (14, p. 8; 72, pp. 17-20; 42). During the latter part of his life Strindberg himself showed a lively interest in the history of the family.

In the first volume of his autobiography (69, p. 9) he writes:

There was an old genealogical table in the family which showed noble ancestors on one side, from the seventeenth century. Since then the paternal ancestors—all coming from Jämtland—had been ministers, of Nordic, perhaps of Finnish blood. In the course of time it had become mixed. His paternal grandmother could trace her origin to Germany and a carpenter's family. His grandfather was a grocer in Stockholm, Chief Commander of the City Volunteers (Borgerskapets Infanteri), a high mason and an ardent admirer of Charles XIV.²

One of the members of the family, Major Zakarias Akerfelt, married a young woman by the name of Scheffel, from Wismar, and from her the artistic tendencies are supposed to have come. These tendencies thereupon remained dormant for many years until they again revealed themselves in Strindberg's grandfather, the above mentioned grocer and Chief Commander of the City Volunteers, Zakarias Strindberg.

²Jean Baptiste Jules Bernadotte, founder of the present dynasty and king of Sweden 1818-1844.

Already as a young man he seems to have had a taste for dramatic sketching, but in all probability business and other circumstances prevented him from developing his talent.

The three brief plays which he left to posterity do not herald the famous grandson. Uddgren says (72, p. 19):

All they show, is that the worthy major possessed a good deal of feeling and a sense of humor and that he tried in so far as he was able to go his own ways.

Concerning the above mentioned Zakarias Strindberg, Es-swein (14, p. 9) makes the following statement:

His portrait shows in the formation of the forehead and the eyebrows, which point to a passionate and at the same time highly differentiated character, a striking likeness to the features of the poet (August Strindberg).

It would seem from the several studies of Strindberg's remote ancestors that they were physically and mentally sound. The same is largely true of his parents. His father was undoubtedly of a rugged physique and mentally as sound as the average man. The son characterizes him as a man of great reserve and will-power whom business failures and conjugal unhappiness had turned into an uncommunicative, melancholy solitaire, who had a wound which he wanted to conceal and to heal, but who had not given up the hope of rising in the world once more. He died in 1883.

By far the weakest link in Strindberg's hereditary chain is the mother. She died from tuberculosis in 1862 at the age of thirty-nine. We are informed by Strindberg himself (68, p. 84) that she was of a very high strung temperament and that her nervousness increased toward the end of her life. "She was more given to moods," he writes, "than before, and contradictions would set her cheeks aflame." On one occasion during a dispute with her brother "she took fire," he says, "and suffered an attack of hysteria."

From the point of view of heredity, therefore, Strindberg entered the race of life somewhat handicapped. Undoubtedly he is correct in his assumption that he inherited his temperament from his mother, for his was very largely that febrile response to stimuli, that activity, restless versatility and sensitiveness to impressions, which Havelock Ellis (13, p. 182) considers so characteristic of the consumptive.

To his physically defective mother may perhaps also be ascribed a serious organic inferiority in the son which I have every reason to believe is not generally known. The malady to which I refer and from which he suffered intensely was *chronic strangury*. I base my statement on a personal communication received from Dr. Magnus Westergren of Boston, Massachusetts, the only living member of a *coterie* to which Strindberg belonged in the middle of the seventies.

In view of these facts we may well accept Dr. Rahmer's (46) conclusions that Strindberg was born a neuropath.

II

The next important factor in Strindberg's life which must be considered before we can proceed to the discussion of his nuclear complex, is his environment.

In the first volume of his autobiography (69, p. 8. ff.) he has given us a most realistic picture of his gloomy home where the son of the grocer and the servant girl awoke to consciousness of self, of life and its duties. His first sensations, according to later recollections, were fear and hunger. He was afraid of darkness, of punishment, of displeasing everybody; he was afraid of falling, of hurting himself, of being in the way.

He was afraid of the fists of his brothers, the hair-pulling of the hired girls, the rebukes of his grandmother, the mother's wrath and the father's rattan cane. He feared the general's servant who stood in the hall downstairs with spiked helmet and side-arm; he feared the deputy landlord when he played around the garbage bin in the yard; he feared the Lord Justice, the landlord.

Everybody seemed to have the right of exercising power over him, from the brothers even to the high court authority of his father. But above all he feared the deputy landlord who pulled his hair and threatened to send the landlord after him.

In his house John's father³ and mother with seven children and two servants occupied three rooms. The furniture consisted largely of tables and beds. Children lay on ironing-boards and chairs, in cradles and beds. In the atmosphere of this home where baptisms and burials followed one another in rapid succes-

³Strindberg's full name was Johan August. In his autobiographical writings he speaks of himself almost exclusively as Johan (John).

sion, John grew sturdy and tall. His playground was the courtyard which he aptly describes as the stone paved bottom of a well into which the sun never shone. A cracked garbage bin with a flap-cover stood by the wall. Slops and sweepings were emptied into it and through the cracks its promiscuous contents flowed into the yard. The other side of the yard was lined with wood sheds and *cabinets d'aisances*. The atmosphere of this yard was one of dampness, gloom and evil odor. But not even in such an abominable *milieu* was John permitted to play unmolested.

Concerning the educational influence of the home he makes the following statement (op. cit. p. 14):

The education consisted of scolding, hair-pulling and exhortations to obedience. The child heard only about his duties, nothing about his rights. Everybody's wishes carried weight, his were suppressed. He could undertake nothing without doing wrong, go nowhere without being in the way, utter no word without disturbing someone. At last he did not dare to move. His highest duty and virtue was to sit on a chair and be quiet. It was continually dinned into him that he had no will of his own, and so the foundation of a weak character was laid.

Later on the cry was: What will the people say? And thus his will was broken so that he could never be true to himself, but was forced to depend on the wavering opinion of others, except on a few occasions when he felt his energetic soul work independently of his will.

The child was very sensitive. He wept so often that he received a special nickname for doing so. He felt the least remark keenly and was ever in a state of fear lest he should do something wrong. He was very awake to injustice and while making great demands upon himself he narrowly watched the failings of his brothers. When they escaped punishment he felt deeply injured. When they were undeservedly rewarded his sense of justice suffered. He was accordingly considered envious.

In due time he entered Clara School where the discipline was exceedingly severe. Mere tardiness was subject to corporal punishment. A single illustration will suffice to show why, in later years, Strindberg avoided everything that might remind him of his childhood Inferno, and forced him to declare that his worst nightmare was to dream himself back in school.

Once he was the unfortunate latecomer (op. cit. p. 33):

With a slow step he entered the hall. Only the porter is there who laughs at him and writes his name on the blackboard under the heading "Late." A painful hour follows, and then loud cries are heard in the lower school and the blows of a cane fall rapidly. It is the headmaster who has made an onslaught on the tardy ones, or takes his exercise on them. John bursts into tears and trembles from head to foot—not from

fear of pain, but from a feeling of shame to think that he should be fallen upon like an animal doomed to slaughter, or a criminal.

It was here that he became convinced that school life was a preparation for hell rather than for life, and that life itself was a penal institution for crimes committed before birth, on account of which he went about with a perpetual bad conscience. Here, moreover, he first felt the whole crushing weight of class distinction. It was a school for the well-to-do. John wore leather breeches and greased leather boots which smelled of oil and blacking, on which account the boys who wore velvet jackets refused to sit near him.

Neglect of his studies and rebellion against his teachers earned him poor marks. Thereupon his father removed him to Jacob's school. Here the boys were poorly dressed, had sores under their noses, ugly features and smelled badly. In this school, which formed a sharp contrast to Clara school in that it was largely frequented by children of the poor, John undoubtedly acquired that sympathy for the lower classes which is so strongly reflected in his satirical and socialistic works. The conditions of this school as well as those of a large percentage of the pupils attending it are well illustrated by the following episode told by Strindberg himself. In the school in question there was a boy who was always untidy, who smelled badly and had a discharge from the ear. He was scolded and beaten by the teacher and avoided by the schoolmates. On account of absence from classes John was sent to investigate the cause and to report his findings to the teacher. What did he find? He found conditions somewhat similar to those of his own home. The boy was tending his little sister, the grandmother carried a baby in her arms, and the parents were out working. In this single room—the home of the family—there was an odor of sulphur fumes from the coal fire and a strong smell of human excrements. Here clothes were dried, food cooked, paint stuffs ground, putty kneaded. In this environment young Strindberg discovered the fundamental cause for his schoolmate's immorality.

The rebellion against prescribed studies characteristic of his terms in the Clara and Jacob's Schools continued in the Lyceum and the Gymnasium which he entered in 1861 and 1863 respectively. When he graduated from the latter institution in 1867, at the age of eighteen, he was a man and had passed through all the severe crises incident to puberty. They had shaken his

sion, John grew sturdy and tall. His playground was the courtyard which he aptly describes as the stone paved bottom of a well into which the sun never shone. A cracked garbage bin with a flap-cover stood by the wall. Slops and sweepings were emptied into it and through the cracks its promiscuous contents flowed into the yard. The other side of the yard was lined with wood sheds and *cabinets d'aisances*. The atmosphere of this yard was one of dampness, gloom and evil odor. But not even in such an abominable *milieu* was John permitted to play unmolested.

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fear of pain, but from a feeling of shame to think that he should be fallen upon like an animal doomed to slaughter, or a criminal.

It was here that he became convinced that school life was a preparation for hell rather than for life, and that life itself was a penal institution for crimes committed before birth, on account of which he went about with a perpetual bad conscience. Here, moreover, he first felt the whole crushing weight of class distinction. It was a school for the well-to-do. John wore leather breeches and greased leather boots which smelled of oil and blacking, on which account the boys who wore velvet jackets refused to sit near him.

Neglect of his studies and rebellion against his teachers earned him poor marks. Thereupon his father removed him to Jacob's school. Here the boys were poorly dressed, had sores under their noses, ugly features and smelled badly. In this school, which formed a sharp contrast to Clara school in that it was largely frequented by children of the poor, John undoubtedly acquired that sympathy for the lower classes which is so strongly reflected in his satirical and socialistic works. The conditions of this school as well as those of a large percentage of the pupils attending it are well illustrated by the following episode told by Strindberg himself. In the school in question there was a boy who was always untidy, who smelled badly and had a discharge from the ear. He was scolded and beaten by the teacher and avoided by the schoolmates. On account of absence from classes John was sent to investigate the cause and to report his findings to the teacher. What did he find? He found conditions somewhat similar to those of his own home. The boy was tending his little sister, the grandmother carried a baby in her arms, and the parents were out working. In this single room—the home of the family—there was an odor of sulphur fumes from the coal fire and a strong smell of human excrements. Here clothes were dried, food cooked, paint stuffs ground, putty kneaded. In this environment young Strindberg discovered the fundamental cause for his schoolmate's immorality.

The rebellion against prescribed studies characteristic of his terms in the Clara and Jacob's Schools continued in the Lyceum and the Gymnasium which he entered in 1861 and 1863 respectively. When he graduated from the latter institution in 1867, at the age of eighteen, he was a man and had passed through all the severe crises incident to puberty. They had shaken his

psyche to its very foundation and left an indelible impression upon his later life.

The death of his mother had marked the inception of a religious crisis which took the form of a mild anxiety neurosis. One is tempted to seek its origin first of all in the loss of his mother, the pietistic atmosphere in which he had moved during his childhood and early youth, and the promise which the mother exacted from the thirteen-year-old boy on her death bed, to live close to God—a promise which he failed to keep. But while all these facts undoubtedly stand in a close causative relation to his state of mind, the real source of his *Weltschmerz* must be sought in the deeper strata of his unconscious mind.

The reader of *The Son of a Servant*, which is the history of the development of a soul, cannot fail to notice that the young boy even from the earliest childhood struggled with melancholia which was but another expression of his morbid fears and his intense and persistent feeling of guilt.

A guilty conscience is unthinkable without a cause or causes. Psychoanalysis has demonstrated beyond a shade of doubt that the consciousness of guilt is in every case a product of repression. Pfister says (45, p. 101):

One of the most frequent sources, where it appears with great force and in conjunction with anxiety, is masturbation.

With reference to the same perverse practice, Bleuler (9) has made the following significant statement:

I know of only one source as yet of the feeling of guilt, which one might call religious or transcendental: onanism or some similar sexual transgression. Where I could analyse such feelings of guilt I came upon sexual self-reproach.

Moreover, clinical experiences have confirmed Sadger in his belief that youthful preoccupation with and worship of virtue is always an over compensation for this very common and serious childhood sin of masturbation. The individual's unsatiable demands for parental tenderness, his morbid longing for trust and confidence, his excessive need of confiding in and being understood by his parents, brothers, sisters and friends, excessive curiosity and abnormal intellectual activities, shyness, blushing, stuttering, blinking, obstinacy, enviousness—all are symptoms of secret indulgence in masturbatory practices.

This had been clearly demonstrated in a very large number of clinical cases and ordinary analyses of which von Kleist (52) is a brilliant example, to mention no others. It is also interesting to know that ordinarily the malady breaks out only when the onanism previously practiced without restraint or hesitation is suddenly stopped, because of threatening warnings (45, p. 102).

Again, Freud (23, p. 98) has pointed out, and it has been fully borne out by analyses that premature intellectual development and sexual precocity go hand in hand. This would be ample proof in Strindberg's case had we no other evidence of the fact that he was given to perverse practices, but thanks to his unusual candor we need not resort to any hypothetical statements. After having described his experiences at Mariefred he says (69, p. 68):

The whole matter scarcely seemed to have any connection with the higher sexual life, for the boy had been in love with a girl at the age of eight when the sexual impulse was as yet completely dormant.

Consequently he concluded that this incident formed no turning point in his psychic life, for he was born a brooding spirit and his new thoughts only made him a recluse.

Besides, he soon quit the vicious habit when he came across a book that frightened him. But then there ensued in its place a fight against desires which he could not conquer, since they attacked him in the form of dream illusions when his powers of resistance were at an end, and quiet sleep he was not permitted to enjoy until at the age of eighteen when he had established connection with the opposite sex.

The book which fell into his hands he describes as a terrible piece of literature. He fairly devoured it. His knees trembled and the blood receded from his face, his pulses froze. He was thus condemned to death or lunacy at the age of twenty-five. His spinal marrow and the brain would disappear, his hair would fall out, his hands tremble. And the cure? Was there one? Yes—Jesus. But He could only cure the soul, and the only thing for him to do was to save it from eternal damnation.

Later on he came across another book intended to counteract the dangerous work referred to above, but for an entire year he found no word of consolation. Accordingly he began to study the pietistic literature left by the mother where he made a new acquaintance with Jesus and prayed and suffered agony. He felt like a criminal and humbled himself. In going through the

streets he would step out of the way of people. In this way he crucified himself daily, in the expectation of soon entering into the joy of the Lord.

Lack of space forbids my going into further detail as regards this uniquely important phase of his development, to which he himself has given so much attention in his autobiography. I cannot resist the temptation, however, of giving a concrete example of how furiously he fought against the onslaught of his awakening sexual life during the storm and stress of puberty (64 Ch. I).

His mother had been dead two years and the time had come for his confirmation. Under the tremendous weight of his moral conflict he one day found himself in a motley crowd of catechumens upon whom the discourse on the wounds and precious blood of Christ had no effect whatever. Here he avows that for the first time in his life he became fully conscious of the two worlds, the spiritual and secular. The promise he made to his mother was uppermost in his mind (op, cit. p. 33):

He had a dim notion that once upon a time a terrible crime had been committed which it was now everybody's business to hide by practicing countless deceptions.

The minister brought up the question of immorality. It was largely a rehearsal of the old subject. The unpardonable sin was bound to result in death and there was only one remedy; complete surrender to Christ. When John came home he felt degraded, touched no food, went to his bedroom and read a book which the minister had lent him. It was on the subject of the vanity of reason. Reason was sin for it questioned God's existence and tried to understand what was not meant to be understood. The boy surrendered. He read Arndt, recited the creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Blessing, went to bed, fell asleep, awoke in the middle of the night dreaming of a champagne supper in company with a girl. He sprang out of bed, threw the bedclothes on the floor and lay down uncovered on the mattress. He was cold and hungry, but he felt that the devil had to be subdued. He repeated the prayers. Finally he fell asleep and dreamed that lovely forms appeared before him. He heard low voices, stifled laughs, soft music and saw sparkling wines, cheerful faces and candid eyes. Presently a curtain was drawn apart, a charming little face looked in between red silk draperies, her slender throat was bare, the beautiful sloping shoulders reminded him of Greek

sculpture. She held out her arms and he drew her to his throbbing heart.

Frightened almost to death he sprang out of bed once more and kneeled on the bare floor, fervently praying God for strength. After the prayer he removed the bedclothes and slept on the bare spring. The following morning he awoke with a high fever and was then confined to his bed for six weeks. Medical attendance, plenty of food and rest, restored his strength and the struggle began with renewed vigor.

To understand the boy's religious conflict we must bear in mind that parallel with the pietistic movement there ran a strong reactionary current known as the New Realism, and that the boy was familiar with and consciously and unconsciously influenced by its doctrines.

Chapter VIII of *The Son of a Servant* is an indisputable proof of my contention. It shows that he was seriously concerned with questions of grave philosophical content such as Fate versus Reason, Freedom of the Will, Predestination, and a host of other more or less unprofitable queries. Already at the tender age of fifteen he was exceedingly well read. In the field of *Belles Lettres* and the drama he had discovered Byron, Walter Scott, Tasso, Zola, Dickens, Eugène Sue, Alexandre Dumas, and according to his own statement he had devoured the complete works of Shakespeare in Hagberg's translation.

But the most pronounced influence came from other quarters. In the Gymnasium he had read Renan's *Life of Jesus* and Cramér's *Farewell to the Church*. Just to what extent he was familiar with Boström's *Doctrine of Hell*, Rydberg, Krummacher, Norbeck, Darwin, Moleschott and other authors whom he quotes or mentions is difficult to say. But it is safe to assume that these and similar works formed the basis of his skepticism.

Now while in this state of high psychic tension he chanced to meet a young engineer whose arguments further undermined his tottering faith, and finally when Theodore Parker's sermons without Christ and hell fell into his hands, the dogmatic foundation of his religious belief collapsed. But his conscience still stood between him and the harmonious life for which his childish soul yearned, and he was now in greater need of a guiding hand than ever before. His Virgil soon appeared in the person of a sophisticated school-mate. One day the latter proposed that they take lunch together. Strindberg agreed and this incident became a memorable event in his life. A square meal with beer

and brandy dispelled the gloom of life and from that day Strindberg was a changed man. It was a solid pleasure he tells us (68 p. 146) to feel the red blood course through half-empty arteries, which were to nourish the nerves for the struggle of life. It was a pleasure to feel spent strength return and lax sinews of a half-crushed will stretched again. Hope was awakened, the mist became a rosy cloud and the friend made him see glimpses of the future as it was formed by friendship and youth.

During his last year in the Gymnasium he became the ring-leader of a number of rebellious classmates and in spite of threats and exhortations on the part of the Rector of the institution, he refused to attend morning prayers. His realization of God in nature replaced the desire to worship Him in temples made by the hands of men. He was a freethinker, a rationalist, in whose restless and revolutionary mind the various conceptions of life presented themselves in the profoundest antitheses. As such he entered the University and soon found himself in a greater conflict with self, God and humanity than ever before. A psycho-analytic inquiry into the causes of this, his life long conflict, is the purpose of the following pages.

III

In the preceding pages I have presented a brief outline of Strindberg's eventful life. I have also discussed in such detail as seemed to me not only desirable but necessary for an understanding of the analysis, his ancestry, parentage, home environment, his life and experiences in school and Gymnasium, and the crises incident to puberty and adolescence. It now remains for me to consider the most important aspect of his life and development—his relation to his parents.

From his autobiography we know that like all other children he was weak and that he craved maternal affection in an unusual degree. In this work as well as in many others he has expressed himself in the most unequivocal terms with reference to this very important matter.

In speaking of his gloomy home and his father's diversions, one of which was to cultivate flowers in window boxes, John tells us that he specialized in pelargoniums but that he, at that time, could not understand why. Later, however, when the mother was in her grave and John had visions of her, he imagined that he

saw her round about the pelargoniums in the windows. He says (69. p. 12):

The mother was pale. She had undergone twelve confinements and had become consumptive. It may be that her face resembled the transparent white petals of the pelargoniums with their crimson veins, which grew darker towards the pistil, so as to form an almost black pupil, black like hers.

Again, when discussing the subject of favoritism and the enviable position of his oldest brother, who, by the way, suffered from hysteria, he says (*op. cit.* pp. 14-15):

This brother was the mother's favorite, the other one that of the father. There are favorites in all families. That is the way one child wins more sympathy than the other. Why this is so is difficult to say. John was nobody's favorite. He felt it and it hurt him.

When the grandmother noticed his predicament she tried to console him, but he rejected her sympathy. He was not satisfied with her love, he wished to win that of his mother. In trying to do so, however, he acted awkwardly and was repulsed. But in the darkness of the night when the child suffered with nervousness the mother, his only consolation, would steal to his bedside, tuck the clothes around him and whisper in his ear: "Don't be afraid, God will protect the unfortunate ones."

One fine summer day John and his brothers started off on a vacation and in the evening he found himself standing on the deck of a steamer "far off to sea." This, he remarks, is that part of the day which is always melancholy, like the beginning of old age . . . He began to miss something; he had a feeling of emptiness, of being deserted, broken off. It was a longing to return home, and when he realized that this could not be done immediately he was filled with terror. He despaired and wept. When the brothers learned that he was homesick, sick for the mother, they ridiculed him (*op. cit.* p 41).

But her image recurs to him serious, mild and smiling. Her last words at parting still ring in his ears: "Be obedient and respectful to all, take care of your clothes and don't forget your evening prayers."

This stirred up remorse in his sensitive heart. He realized how often he had been disobedient and felt concerned about her health. She became transfigured, as it were, and drew him to her "with unbreakable cords of longing." This feeling of loneli-

ness and longing for his mother, he affirms, followed him all through life. He could never understand why, but wondered whether he had not come too early and incomplete into the world. What could hold him so closely bound to his mother? This question he could never find an answer to either in books or in life. But of one thing he felt certain: he never became himself, he was never liberated, never a complete individuality, and so he compared himself to a mistletoe, a climbing plant that must have support.

The mother was not always just and loving (op. cit. p. 13).

. . . but for the children she played the part of Providence itself. She cut ingrown nails, bandaged injured fingers, always comforted, quieted and soothed when the father punished, although she was the official accuser.

While away from home on the said vacation he spent much of his time pining for the mother, or else he was in extremely high spirits and indulged in risky amusements. He characterized himself (op. cit. p. 45) as,

alternately timid and daring, overflowing with spirits, or brooding, but without the proper balance.

And again (op. cit. p. 46):

After he had parted from his mother and felt himself surrounded by unknown threatening powers, a profound need of having recourse to some protecting powers awakened in him.

Not being able to flee to his mother he turned to God in prayer. He writes (op. cit. p. 46):

He said his evening prayers with a fair amount of devotion, but in the morning when the sun shone and he was well rested, he did not feel the need of it.

This dependence upon and constant longing back to the mother, which is more or less basic in every human life, is very conspicuous in Strindberg. Unconsciously he "yearns retrogressively from the struggles . . . of life towards the safe haven of childhood," (34 p. 149) and the failure to realize this ardent desire is the main source of his psychic conflict.

In the first chapter of *Married* (64 p. 9 ff) he gives a very sympathetic description of himself and his mother—the mother

who "thought only of heaven and the children," who had always been her husband's truest friend, the only human being who had never been jealous or envious . . . and who had never contradicted him.

During the twelve months of her illness, he tells us, he had come to know her personally and a very close relationship had sprung up between them, a relationship, he emphasizes, that is rare between parents and children. In the story last quoted he represents himself as a young boy, the son of a professor. He writes,

The mother on the other hand, was not a well educated woman. She had merely been head housekeeper and children's nurse in her husband's house. Numerous births and countless vigils (she had not slept through a single night for the last sixteen years) had exhausted her strength. When she became bedridden at the age of thirty-nine and was no longer able to manage the house, she made the acquaintance of her second son.

Now that her part as mother of the family was played to the end and nothing remained of her but a poor invalid, the old-fashioned relationship of strict discipline, that barrier between parents and children was superseded. The thirteen-year-old boy was almost constantly at her bedside, reading to her whenever he was not at school or doing home lessons. She had many questions to ask and he had a great deal to explain, and, therefore, all those distinguishing marks erected by age and position vanished one after another; if there was a superior at all it was the son.

But the mother also had much to teach, for she had learned her lesson in the school of life, and so they were alternately teacher and pupil.

They discussed all subjects. With the tact of a mother and the modesty of her sex, she told her son all that he should know of the mystery of life. He was still innocent, but he had heard many things discussed by the boys at school which had shocked and disgusted him. The mother explained to him all she could explain, warned him of the greatest dangers to a young man, and exacted a promise from him never to visit a house of ill-fame, not even out of curiosity, because, as she pointed out, in such a case no man could ever trust himself. And she implored him to lead a temperate life and turn to God in prayer whenever temptation assaulted him.

By this time the bankruptcy of the father had been forgotten, the family had moved into better quarters and prosperity reigned in the home. Life now looked bright to the young boy. He no longer felt the unbearable pressure of past years and he would in all probability have found, he assures us, an easy path through life, had not Fate willed otherwise.

It was the mother, the ruling passion of his young life, that

now cast a sudden impenetrable gloom over his budding life. She had now been ill for a year and was not expected to live.

One night he was aroused from his sleep and in the dark he heard a deep trembling voice calling him to his mother's death bed. (68 p. 86 ff.)

It went through him like a flash of lightning. He froze and trembled while dressing, his head felt ice-cold, his eyes were wide open and the tears streamed so freely that the lamp flame appeared like a red blur. And now they stood by the death bed and wept for hours . . . His mother was unconscious and recognized none of them . . . John thought of all the sins he had committed and found no good deeds to counterbalance them. After three hours of weeping his thoughts began to take various directions . . . "How will it be," he asked himself, "when mother is no longer there?" Nothing but emptiness and desolation; no comfort, no compensation. There was nothing but a deep gloom in which he searched for a ray of light.

And now his eyes fell on the mother's chests of drawers and he happened to think that in it lay the only compensation for his loss, the gold ring that his mother had promised him. He would wear this ring and weep when it reminded him of her. These thoughts he immediately repressed, he tells us, but no matter how deep within him this incident was buried, he could never forget it.

It kept turning up now and then, and when he thought of it during sleepless nights and in hours of weariness, he felt a flush of shame mount to his cheeks. Then he began to examine himself and his conduct and reproached himself with being the meanest of all men.

On the day of the burial he was able to exercise perfect control, probably because of the fact that he felt concerned and somewhat responsible for the younger members of the family. To Strindberg, blood was always thicker than water. That is, indeed, one of his traits. He states elsewhere (69 p. 44) that he could not see any one of his own flesh and blood suffer . . . without feeling it intensely. This was but another instance of his lack of independence, a proof of the irrefutable reality of consanguinity, of the umbilical cord, which could not be cut but only gnawed off.

Now when he felt the small trembling body of his infant sister clinging to him he suddenly became possessed of a strength which he had not experienced heretofore. Disconsolate, he was able to console and in quieting her he himself became quiet.

With reference to his mourning of the mother he makes the

rather surprising statement that his sense of real loss scarcely lasted more than three months. This statement he immediately reinforces or rather rejects by saying that he mourned her loss much longer, but that was more because of a need to continue in that mood, which was one of natural melancholy.

The two main components of Strindberg's psychic attitude towards the father are admiration and fear. His admiration for him is due in a great degree to the fact that he could trace his origin back to nobility, which places him in the sharpest contrast to his plebeian wife who, to use Strindberg's own words (69, p 10),

was a poor tailor's daughter sent out into life by her stepfather to make her own living, first as a servant girl and later as a café waitress, in which position she was discovered by John's father.

Despite the fact that their relations were seriously strained even from the earliest childhood, John could not but admire his father. Not only was he deeply impressed by the manner in which he dealt with the servants, since it bespoke authority and power, but he was infatuated with his father's personality. His features, beautifully regular and strong, his neat appearance, clean linen, full beard, his spectacles, his hair combed according to the style of Louis-Philippe, his bearing in general—everything in his makeup proclaimed the man of aristocratic blood.

But here his admiration ended. No matter how sincere it was, it was always overshadowed by an ungovernable fear, at least during his pre-pubertal stage of development. As to what extent this fear was justifiable we cannot long be in doubt if we recall that the discipline of the home was most severe and that it often bordered on cruelty which was largely enforced by the father. The mere mention of his name was enough to strike terror in the hearts of the children. The threat to tell father, was identical with a thrashing (op. cit. p 12).

At the cry: "Father is coming," the children ran and hid themselves or rushed into the nursery to be combed and washed. At the table there was a death-like silence and the father spoke but little.

In referring to the strict discipline of the home Strindberg tells us that falsehood was subject to merciless punishment. This also applied to disobedience in general. As a typical example of the manner in which the boy was taught the value of truthfulness I cite the episode of an emptied wine flask (68 p. 10):

One day during the midday meal his father examined the wineflask. It was empty. "Who has drunk the wine," he asked, looking around the circle. No one answered, but John blushed.

"It is you then," said the father. John who had never noticed where the wineflask was hidden burst into tears and sobbed: "I did not drink the wine." "So you lie, too. When dinner is over you will get something."

The thought of what he would get after dinner, as well as the continued remarks about John's secretiveness caused his tears to flow even faster. They arose from the table. "Come here," said the father, and went into the bedroom. His mother followed. "Ask father's forgiveness," she said as the father took down the rod from behind the mirror.

"Dear Papa, forgive me," cried the innocent child. But now it was too late, he had confessed the theft and the mother assisted in the execution. John howled from rage and pain, but chiefly from a sense of humiliation.

"Ask father's forgiveness now," repeated the mother. The child looked at her and despised her. He now felt lonely and deserted by her to whom he had always fled to find comfort and consolation, but so seldom justice. He again asked his father's forgiveness with compressed, lying lips.

Then he stole away to the kitchen, to the nursemaid who always combed and washed him, to sob away his grief in her apron. In reply to her question as to what he had done he answered "nothing." Just then the mother appeared and overheard John's denial. Once more he was fetched into the bedroom and tortured until he had confessed an offence of which he was not guilty.

Vividly recalling these experiences he cried out with indignation more than thirty years later (op. cit. pp. 11-12):

Splendid moral institution, sacred family, unassailable and divinely appointed, where citizens are to be educated in truth and virtue. Thou pretended home of the virtuous, where innocent children are tortured into their first falsehood, where wills are broken by tyranny, and self respect killed by narrow egoism. Family, thou art the home of all social evils, a charitable institution for comfortable women, an anchorage for fathers and a hell for children.

After this day, he declares, he lived in perpetual fear and was absolutely isolated. He suspected enemies everywhere. God, he knew only in his prayers . . . but in the dark he had, like the savage and the animal, premonitions of evil spirits.

Fear is, as we know, the attribute *par excellence* of the weak and helpless. In the same degree as the individual's physical strength and mental powers increase, and providing, of course, that the fear is not successfully repressed, it changes into defiance and hate. This is plainly the case with Strindberg. Never in his life was he able to forget completely the unjust treatment

received during his childhood at the hands of his parents. As soon, therefore, as his strength permitted, he challenged his father, mother and the other members of the family. One or two examples will suffice to illustrate his behavior. After having described in the minutest detail how he successfully picked a quarrel with his father and how by means of a skillful and malicious manipulation of the material at his disposal he succeeded in giving his mother the lie, he says (69, p. 64):

The coldness towards the father increases and now he (John) is on the lookout for acts of oppression, and despite his weakness he makes attempts at rebellion on a small scale.

One of the many ways in which he tried out his strength and the safety of his policy of opposition was by refusing to go to church. When he found that this might be done with impunity, he grew bolder.

The gradually increasing tension between the father and the son reached its culmination when, less than twelve months after the death of his wife, the father announced his intention of marrying the housekeeper. Strindberg says (op. cit. p. 92):

The two elder brothers took the matter lightly and were resigned. The father-cult was their religion. They believed, never doubted. They had never thought of fatherhood as being an accident that might befall anyone.

But John doubted. He fell into endless disputes with his brothers and attacked the father for becoming engaged before the expiration of the conventional period of mourning. He conjured up the shades of his mother, prophesied disaster and ruin, and worked himself up about it and went to extremes.

Later on at a gathering of the new relatives in the home, he absolutely refused to meet them. His father was vexed but did not wish to show it. After exchanging a few unfriendly words with the father, the boy went upstairs to his room (op. cit. p. 93):

Here it was cold and dark and he could not work on account of the music and the dancing below . . . Hungry and angry he paced up and down the room. At intervals he wanted to go downstairs where it was light, warm, and cheerful, and several times he took hold of the door knob. But he turned back for he was shy . . . He went to bed hungry and considered himself the most unfortunate creature in the world.

On his father's wedding day he revolted. He did not kiss the bride like the brothers and sisters, but withdrew to the toddy room where he became somewhat intoxicated.

About this time he entered the Gymnasium. This meant a decided rise in the world. From the point of view of the school authorities he was no longer a boy. The conditions of the home continued to be the same, or became worse. Under the new *régime* of the stepmother food was scarce, and the father refused to provide him with proper clothing and up-to-date text books, on which account the boy became an object of ridicule among his schoolmates. What depressed him was that this poverty was imposed upon him as a retaliation, a punishment, for it was not a necessity. When he complained about it to his brothers they told him not to be proud. He now came to the conclusion that the difference in his and their education had opened up a gulf between them. They belonged to a different class in society and ranged themselves on the side of the father who was of their class and the one in authority.

But there was yet another kind of humiliation or punishment in store for him. In spite of the fact that there was no lack of servants in the home, the boy was aroused early each morning and sent out on different errands. When pleading lack of time he was invariably told that he would always find time for his studies. Later in life he asked himself whether all this had been done purposely, *i. e.*, whether the father thus endeavored to counteract the harmful effects of excessive brain activities, or whether it was for some other reason unknown to the boy. He himself failed to see any beneficent intention in the matter. He says (op. cit. p 101):

The whole affair seemed so dictated by malice and an intention to cause pain that it was impossible for him to discover any good purpose though it may have existed along with the evil one.

To relate even superficially the continuous conflicts, real and imaginary, extending over the adolescent period of the boy would call for more space than this study could well afford to give to the subject. Nor is it necessary. The antagonism and enmity between the father and the stepmother on the one hand and the future famous author on the other, I trust I have demonstrated beyond a shade of doubt. The significance of these relations will be dealt with presently.

IV

I think we may assume, without much risk, on the basis of the evidence that I have presented in the preceding chapters, that we are dealing with a real case of psycho-sexual fixation on the mother, with its consequent concomitant feature—hatred of the father. Neither can there be any valid doubt about Strindberg's marked neurotic tendencies manifest already at a very early age.

To the Freudian Psychologist this means that the serious psychic anomalies so characteristic of Strindberg's later life were due to unsuccessful repression of the so called *libido sexualis*. The Adlerian, on the other hand, would be governed by other considerations and attribute his extraordinary life and achievements to organ inferiority and subsequent psychic over compensation. Others again, failing to accept either one of the theories referred to, would probably apply the principles of Jung (37 p. XXXV) who places the pathogenetic conflict in the present moment, and holds that it is produced by some important task or duty which is essential biologically and practically for the fulfilment of the *ego* of the individual, but before which an obstacle arises from which he shrinks and thus halted cannot go on.

It would be difficult, it seems to me, to demonstrate in a convincing manner that the Strindberg problem could not be fairly successfully solved by the methods referred to, either separately or jointly. This would hold more particularly in a *post mortem* analysis where the psychiatric aim is no longer a matter of consideration. In the following analysis, therefore, I shall make free use, in so far as I am able, of psycho-analytic principles and technique, regardless of their origin, and in so far as they do not conflict.

As far as I am aware, no psycho-analytic study in the Freudian sense has been made of Strindberg. Bjerre, (7 pp. 138-139) however, in his *History and Practice of Psychoanalysis* states that Strindberg has been the object of study by Freschl, a devoted follower of Adler. He writes:

The neurotic, as I have already said, occupies a place between . . . two extremes. He keeps himself within the framework of the outside reality; but he lives either upon phantasies which have nothing to do with reality—or else makes continual unsuccessful efforts to overcome it as a creator. To Adler, Strindberg is the embodiment of this conception (4 p. 248 ff). It is well-known how, in childhood, Strindberg suffered

from an overruling feeling of inferiority, and all his after life was a series of desperate efforts to work himself . . . out of this. All that he aimed to construct to this end soon collapsed and he again stood in the same place as before. In spite of all his unprecedented power for creating, he never succeeded in bringing out one single value that became established for himself or could show a way for others;—it all dissolved in chaos. Finally he succumbed to the feeling of inferiority with which he started out, dying with the cross before his eyes and hate in his heart; the cross, which is the everlasting symbol of inability to master the earthly life, and hate, which is only the negation of all emotional value.

And again (7 pp. 154-155):

One of Adler's most faithful adherents, Freschl, has recently devoted himself to a study of Strindberg's book *For Pay*. This points out how, for the author, everything was a question of power, an effort to demonstrate his superiority. He feels his inferiority in regard to woman and marries three times in hopes of finally becoming master over some one. At the bottom of his inclination to endow woman at one and the same time with irresistible charm, and with the most horrible qualities, lies one of those strange stratagems which are so often met with in neurotics; he does it to protect himself from the humiliation which otherwise would mean his going under in the battle against her, for no one need be ashamed of being unable to withstand such monsters of artifice and enchantment as he makes his fictitious women appear to be. Helen must conquer in order to show the dangerous power of which she is possessed and it is easy to understand the need of the man to protect himself against her—against woman—etc. Out of Strindberg's life and out of all his books it is easy to see how aggression tendencies originated from a neurotic thought scheme, to which he must cling in order to assure himself, since he plainly felt how great was his insecurity against woman. This feeling of powerlessness in the struggle against her was, however, only one expression standing out in the foreground, for a general feeling of inferiority which he had with him from the very beginning. When Strindberg speaks of love between man and woman, it does not mean anything like love, but only the question which of the two shall get the better of the other in the struggle for power.

Since I have not had access to Freschl's study, I cannot discuss its merits but Strindberg's story is not, in my opinion, good proof of his desire for power or a demonstration of superiority. The story in question may be found in *Married* (64 p. 261 ff.) under the title of *Corinna*, and I leave it to the reader to decide whether it is anything else than a sex duel conceivable in the case of any man who is unfortunate enough to marry a woman suffering from chronic sexual anasthesia, and accompanying masculine tendencies. A far better field for the gleanings of proofs of his struggle for power wherewith to counterbalance his deep-seated

and intense feeling of inferiority and threatened security may be found in his autobiographical works.

It seems to me after a careful perusal of a large number of Strindberg's representative works, as well as of criticism and interpretation, that in spite of his marked egocentric tendencies, which must be recognized, one would have to be especially biased in favor of the Adlerian theory in order to make it the exclusive basis for a psycho-analytic study of the man.

In his *Makers of Man*, Charles J. Whitby (76 p. 316) makes the following significant statement:

No investigation of the types of human greatness could be in any way satisfactory—it is futile to talk of “completeness” in such a connection—which ignored the great question of their sexual proclivities. In no other manifestation of temperament or character are more significant glimpses to be obtained of the fundamental spiritual attitude towards life and its responsibilities, whose diagnosis is the ultimate desideratum of ethological scrutiny. A man's conception of womanhood in general, and of his relation thereto, is one of the main expressions, perhaps *the* main expression of his general instinctive bias. It colors, for good or evil, his entire emotional and intellectual being and largely determines his rank in the scale of spiritual values.

This is undoubtedly true not only of types of human greatness, but of man in general, no matter what his intellectual and other endowments may be. That it is eminently true of Strindberg I shall endeavor to prove in the following pages, and to this end I will immediately proceed to a consideration of his family constellation. Let us begin with his father.

Freud (19) has pointed out, and it has been corroborated by Jung, and others, that the father's influence upon the child exerts the most lasting of all influences and is of an overwhelming importance in any later neurosis.

Says Jung (36 p. 156):

This relationship is in fact the infantile channel *par excellence* in which the libido flows back when it encounters any obstacles in later years, thus revivifying long-forgotten dreams of childhood. It is ever so in life when we draw back from too great an obstacle—the menace of some severe disappointment or the risk of some too-far-reaching decision—the energy stored up for the solution of the task flows back impotent; the by-streams once relinquished as inadequate are again filled up. He who has missed the happiness of a woman's love falls back, as a substitute, upon some gushing friendship; upon masturbation, upon religiosity; should he be a neurotic, he plunges still further back into the conditions of childhood which have never been quite forsaken,

to which indeed the normal is fettered by more than one link—he returns to the relationship to father and mother.

For a fuller treatment of the subject, the reader is referred to the work of Dr. Emma Fürst (28) whose achievements in this particular field are of special importance.

But the far-reaching importance of the father complex is perhaps most convincingly demonstrated by Jung (36 p. 172) in his chapter on the significance of the father.

He says:

If now we survey all the far-reaching possibilities of the infantile constellation we are forced to say that *in essence our life's fate is identical with the fate of our sexuality*. If Freud and his school devote themselves first and foremost to tracing out the individual's sexuality it is certainly not in order to excite piquant sensations, but to gain a deeper insight into the driving forces that determine the individual's fate. If we can strip off the veil shrouding the problems of individual destiny, we can afterwards widen our view from the history of the individual to the history of nations. And first of all we can look at the history of religions, at the history of the phantasy systems of whole peoples and epochs.

And so he goes on to show (op. cit. pp. 173-74) that the Old Testament raised the *Pater familias* to the position of Jehovah of the Jews, whom the people worshipped in fear and dread. The Patriarchs played an intermediate role between man and the Deity. The neurotic awe and dread of the Jewish religion he pronounces an unsuccessful attempt at the sublimation of a still too barbarous people and hence the excessive severity of the Mosaic Law, the ceremonial constraint of the neurotic.

The only ones who succeeded in freeing themselves from this constraint, he continues, were the prophets, who actually identified themselves with Jehovah and thus became the fathers of the people. Through Christ, who was the fulfilment of the prophecy, the fear of God ends, for His message was and is that God is love. But later successful sublimation of the Christian Mass once more leads to the ceremonial of the Church from which, occasionally, some minds—saints and reformers—capable of sublimation—have been able to deliver themselves.

This development of world processes is also seen in the individual. The parents constitute the child's higher controlling power. But as the child grows the clash between the infantile complex and his budding individuality is inevitable. Parental

influence is now forced below the threshold of consciousness, but that does not mean that it is eliminated. For we must remember, —first that one of the most salient characteristics of the Unconscious is its absolute retentiveness, and secondly that its entire content is dynamic. And so, as by invisible threads, as Jung says, the paternal influence directs the creative impulses of the offspring and thus makes possible the first religious sublimation. In due time the father with all his faults and virtues disappears and in his place appears a duality. On the one hand the Deity, on the other the Devil. In the case of the neurotics God is the symbol of complete sexual repression and the devil that of sexual lust.

Pfister (45, pp. 147, 575 and footnote 26) in the discussion of the father and mother complexes shares the views of Freud and Jung. He quotes some of the Saviour's many utterances as regards the necessity of liberation from the father imago; just as he himself effected a complete emancipation from his mother. He quotes the postulate of sublimation formulated in Matthew XXIII, 9:

And call no man your father on the earth; for one is your Father, even He who is in heaven.

Thereby Jesus has relieved the harmful fixation and broken the bonds of free personal development.

In this connection he also cites Hebbel's statement in his *Aufzeichnungen aus meinem Leben* (Chap. V) where he tells us how religion helped him to cut the mental navel string which had previously bound him exclusively to his parents.

The significance of the influence, conscious and unconscious, of the father upon Strindberg's life can hardly be over estimated. To him he owes, to a very large degree—just as Schopenhauer did to his father—his inveterate cynicism, aggressiveness and will to power. To the father influence we may also attribute his unquenchable thirst for knowledge, his incorruptible honesty, rigid truthfulness, his sensitiveness to pressure, the primitive force of his response to environmental stimuli, his dualism, expressed by his continual warfare between the spirit and the flesh, his religious doubts and general skepticism and sense of justice.

The stern, unsympathetic father who, as I have already shown, punished him severely and too often unjustly, bred in the

child a deep, bitter hatred which he soon transferred upon civilization at large with all its restraining influences. It was the father who awakened in the boy the primitive man who fought for his primitive, unlimited rights. In school and college his attitude towards his teachers was largely that which he assumed towards his father. In his discussion of the father complex Frink (27 p. 214) quotes one of his patients as saying:

I have always been so afraid of doing something wrong, that I have never yet done anything right.

That is a true Strindberg sentiment expressed more than once. His whole childhood is characterized, as we know, by over conscientiousness. His entire life up to the Inferno period shows in a most conspicuous manner a transference of the hostile, defiant feelings of his father complex upon such surrogates as University professors, military forces, civic and national governments, prominent individuals in Swedish history (kings, poets, artists), religious institutions and dogma, theatrical managers, newspaper editors,—the world and all that the human kind holds dear. His was the spirit of the iconoclast,

the active atheist, railor at conventional restraint.

Toward the age of fifty an over compensation developed and ambivalently he went to the other extreme of religious fanaticism. If we bear his home environment in mind we can easily understand his horror of authority and the enthusiasm with which he looked forward to the atmosphere of freedom at the University, and with which he embraced everything revolutionary and anarchic during the subsequent thirty years of his life. It is no wonder that his enthusiasm broke all bounds when he discovered Schiller's *Die Räuber* and that he swore immediately by Karl Moor who voiced his own hostility towards the platitudinous conventionalities of life. Here he had found a truly kindred soul who preached insurrection against laws, morals and religion.

Again, it is in part an unconscious revolt against his father, the tyrant of his childhood and youth, that throws him with irresistible force into the rioting crowds on the side of the masses to whom he is related by ties of blood and sentiment (63 p. 70 ff). The same spirit of defiance moves his hand when he sits down to sketch the drama *Jesus of Nazareth* designed to wipe Christianity from the face of the earth. Thorwaldsen, the hero of his juvenile

play *In Rome* (67 pp. 186-187), facing the gigantic statue of Jason, ready to batter it down with a sledge-hammer, is truly symbolic of the youthful author's real attitude towards the object of his deep, unconscious hatred and aversion—his father.

That Strindberg's fate was also closely bound up with and largely shaped by physical qualities inherited from the father is certain. He inherited from him that rugged physique which saved him from premature death and the madhouse on more than one occasion. In his writings he has made little direct mention of his father, but like Goethe, he has told us what he considered was his inheritance from both his father and mother.

In *Married* (64 p. 13) he says:

One might compare the boy's character to an ill-proportioned compensation pendulum; it contained too much soft material of the mother, not enough hard metal of the father. Friction and irregular oscillations were the natural consequences.

But there is still another angle from which we must view the relation of father and son, in order to be able to appreciate to the fullest extent the son's attitude towards the father. Those who are familiar with the Freudian psycho-analytic theory, are well aware of the fact that until Freud's epoch making discovery, in the early eighties of last century, of the cause of hysteria and his subsequent formulation of the theory of sex and the incest motive as the nuclear complex of the neurosis, nothing was known of the close and peculiar relations of the child to its parents. The child was considered asexual up to the time of puberty when the reproductive instinct manifested itself all at once. Now it is a well known fact, even if not generally accepted, that the child passes through three distinct stages of sexual development and that its future depends upon the successful passing of the pre-inhibitory, latency and pubertal periods. Frink writes (27 p. 21):

It will be sufficient . . . to say, that every step in ontogenetic development, every transition that must be passed through, offers possibilities of morbid disturbances through a persistence of this or that phase that should normally be passed, through the opening up of avenues for aberrant development, or through the formation of *locus minoris resistentiae* at which the apparently normally accomplished sexual synthesis may give way under the strain and stress of adult life.

Despite the fact that there is still in the child at this stage of development—the preinhibitory, from three to four years of

age—no sexual synthesis, the infantile eroticism, according to Freud, and others, is not so widely different from adult sexuality as might be expected.

At any rate before the termination of the period the libido turns outward and it is significant that a child even at this early age shows preference for the opposite sex. Here begins the serious development of the child's sexual life. Jealousy of real or apparent rivals is evidently raging in the breast of the child long before it can be detected or its intensity can be determined by the untrained mind. A classical example is that of little Hans of whom Freud (17 pp. 1-122) says in his *Analysis of the Phobia of a Five-year-old Boy*:

In his relation to father and mother Hans confirms most emphatically and palpably everything that I have asserted in the Interpretation of Dreams, and in the Sexual Theory concerning the sexual relation of children to their parents. He is truly a little Oedipus who would like to see his father out of the way in order to be alone with his handsome mother and to sleep with her.

This early selection of the love-object is the foundation of the family constellation known in psycho-analysis as the Oedipus Complex for the male and the Electra Complex for the female child.

The latency period is one of repression of sexual instincts through the ethical and aesthetic forces of inhibition incident to later sexual life. This making over, so to speak, of the primitive instincts for higher purposes is called sublimation. This process may be only partially successful and sex-life may take very definite forms even at this early age. In children showing such tendencies later neurosis or sexual abnormalities may be expected.

This is exactly what happened in the case of Strindberg. Long before the advent of puberty it may be assumed with great certainty that his sex-life reached an abnormal development. The first proof that I venture to offer is the fact that his earliest impressions of life were fear and hunger. Freud (23 p. 83) says:

The fear expressed by children is originally nothing but an expression for the fact that they miss the beloved person. They, therefore, meet every stranger with fear, they are afraid of the dark because they cannot see the beloved person and are calm if they can grasp that person's hand.

With this we may well compare Strindberg's excessively developed fear so graphically described in *The Son of a Servant*.

Again—and this is important to remember since Strindberg attributed his fear partly to the trials which the parents had undergone before his birth and partly to his environment—Freud (op. cit. p. 83) emphasizes that

the effect of childish fears and of the terrifying stories told by nurses is overestimated if one blames the latter for producing fear in children. Children who are predisposed to fear absorb these stories which make no impression whatever upon others; and only such children are predisposed to fear whose sexual impulse is excessive or prematurely developed.

The child, Freud adds, here acts like the adult; its libido is changed into fear when it cannot be gratified and the grown-up having become neurotic because of ungratified libidinous desires, behaves in his anxiety like a child.

Strindberg's early childhood fears which, by the way, he never outgrew were, therefore, but another form of that morbid sexual attachment to the mother which is so plainly visible throughout his whole life.

Because of his constitutional defect⁴ his fears and general feeling of insecurity were undoubtedly aggravated. His behavior throughout childhood and youth is such that one might be warranted in assuming that he suffered from enuresis. His organ inferiority was, as we recall, located in the urinary organs. Says Adler (5. p. 73):

Pavor nocturnus in childhood, which very frequently occurs in enuretic constitutions, arises from the over great necessity for tenderness in such children which finds its outlet at night by sleep and in the dark by fright and screaming. The fearfulness which burdens almost every enuretic in childhood is a universal expression of helplessness in regard to the inferior organ and often burdens even grown people. In later life, in addition to the usual characteristics, fear of water and fire, fear of the night, is frequently added. At times the neurotic is able to conquer the terror in every form and to achieve the contrast, extreme bravery and courage.

Lastly I wish to point out that Adler (op. cit. p. 74) correlates this defect with a series of defects and perversities peculiar to children. In his opinion, it becomes the mainspring in the awakening of auto-eroticism and leads to masturbatory practices. Under certain conditions the enuretic may also incline towards homosexuality and exhibitionism. He says:

⁴See page 17 of this thesis.

The early awakened auto-eroticism makes the child more unfitted for bringing up, the prevention of bad, uncivilized impulses becomes difficult from the outside, for the same reason the child does not adapt itself to cultural life and becomes evil and unamenable. At the same time there arises in him further supports for his cowardice, shyness and anxiety, and he seeks comfort and protection for the understanding which he has of the sin in childish superstitions and religious phantasies with unfortunate results. In the psycho-analysis of neurotic persons we find both in the ideological sexual superstructure. Physiologically viewed it is compensation of the sexual organs in the psychomotor field, strengthening and check. How often these happenings become the foundations of psychoneurosis as soon as compensatory interruption and reciprocal effects of two inferior psychomotor fields occur, Freud has irrefutably shown in his psycho-analytic material.

But even if we were not in possession of all these facts, many other circumstances might be brought forth as potent causes of Strindberg's early awakened sex-life. Says Freud (23 p. 87):

Quarrels between the parents and unhappy marital relations between the same determine the severest predispositions for disturbed sexual development or neurotic disease in the children.

And again (op. cit. p. 98):

Sexual prematurity often runs parallel with premature intellectual development; it is found as such in the infantile history of the most distinguished and most productive individuals and in such connection it does not seem to act so pathogenically as when appearing isolated.

Among the many conditions actively favoring that phase of the child's development which I have discussed may also be mentioned the cramped quarters in which he was reared. Even in the least favorable *milieu* we know that when the child begins to have a faint realization of self as distinguished from his surroundings, he begins a more or less thoroughgoing sexual investigation. This is about the time of transition from the infantile to the latency period. He becomes interested in his own origin and that of others. The many stories of the stork, the doctor, etc., furnish irrefutable proof of the universality of such infantile activities. The sexual investigation normally comes to an end at the beginning of the latency or inhibition period and all memories of the child's early speculation vanish from the mind. But before the approach of puberty a second period begins. The children now discuss the matter openly with one another and in rare cases they learn the whole truth of reproduction from parents, guardians

or teachers. But as a rule their theories are even now absurd. Some children, however, particularly those who share the bedroom with their parents, necessarily must arrive at conclusions different from those of children who have been in a less favorable position for making observations. The former are apt to conceive of parental sex-life as an act of aggression as Freud (op. cit. p. 57) has pointed out. He says:

If children of so delicate an age become spectators of the sexual act between grown-ups . . . it impresses them in a sadistic sense. Psycho-analysis also teaches us that such an early impression contributes much to the disposition for a later sadistic displacement of the sexual aim.

Now if we take into consideration that Strindberg in all probability not only shared the bedroom with his parents but at times their bed, that births and deaths, baptisms and burials alternated in rapid succession and that the child was more observant because of his excessive nervousness, we are forced to the conclusion that his *milieu* was a most favorable one for the development of abnormal infantile phantasies. This helps to explain his sexual aggressiveness in later life.

I must, therefore, conclude from the evidence that I have presented here as well as in preceding chapters, and from an abundance of material that I cannot deal with in this connection, that Strindberg, because of his premature sexual development and fixation on his mother, early began to regard his father as an intruder and a dangerous rival.

The male child's psycho-sexual fixation on the mother and all that it implies, repulsive as it is, is something which may not be explained on the basis of assumed abnormal development and as appertaining only to the degenerate and the neurotic. In discussing the tragic fate of Oedipus Tyrannus, Freud says (19 p. 223):

There must be a voice within us which is prepared to recognize the compelling power of fate, while we justly condemn the situations occurring in *Die Ahnfrau* or in the tragedies of later date as arbitrary inventions. And there must be a factor corresponding to this inner voice in the story of King Oedipus. *His fate moves us only for the reason that it might have been ours, for the Oracle has put the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him.* Perhaps we are all destined to direct our first sexual impulses towards our mother and our first hatred and violent wishes towards our father; our dreams convince us of it. King Oedipus, who has struck his father Laius dead and has married his mother Jocasta,

is nothing but a realized wish of our childhood. But more fortunate than he, we have since succeeded, unless we have become psycho-neurotics, in withdrawing our sexual impulses from our mothers and in forgetting our jealousy of our fathers. We recoil from the person for whom this primitive wish has been fulfilled with all the force of repression which these wishes have suffered within us. By his analysis, showing us the guilt of Oedipus, the poet urges us to recognize our own inner self, in which these impulses, even if suppressed, are still present Like Oedipus, we live in ignorance of the wishes that offend morality, wishes which nature has forced upon us, and after the revelation of which we want to avert every glance from the scenes of our childhood.

To what extent the incestuous impulse is fundamental in the development of all that humanity understands by culture in the fullest sense of the word, the voluminous psycho-analytic literature has shown in astonishing detail. Besides Freud I need mention only such names as Havelock Ellis, Frink, Hugo Hellmuth, Ernest Jones, Jung, Adler, Moll, Reitler, Pfister, Bleuler, Putnam, White, Jelliffe, Brill, Ferenczi, Abraham, Stekel, Reik and Rank (48) whose monumental work *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage* affords us an insight, from the Freudian point of view, into the inner structure of artistic creation and the conditions and processes underlying them. Here the individual roots in their incredible ramifications are shown in the types of the representative incest dramas of the world's literature, ancient and modern. Here the life and death struggle of all the untold ages between father and son, as recorded in myth, fable, Christian Legends and Holy Writ, stands forth in all its repulsiveness. Here again the relation of father and daughter, that of brother and sister, sheds new light upon human life and its hidden motives. Here finally the problem of genius has been represented as inseparably bound up with the nuclear complex of the neurosis—incest—from Sophocles to Ibsen. Says Pfister (45 p. 301):

Whether the incest is constantly the innermost nucleus of the symbols, as Freud assumes, or whether the incest wish, even where it expresses a natural desire, is to be constantly solved as symbol, as Jung asserts, is for me undecided. As remarked before (165) I consider the incestuous wish to be the expression of an actual wish which bears witness to old inhibitions without including at the same time a sublimated impulse.⁵

Whether we accept the one or the other interpretation of the Oedipus phantasy undoubtedly depends in the final analysis

⁵Cf Riklin (49) *Oedipus und Psä. Wissen und Leben V* 1912, p 552.

upon the success or failure of our own infantile sexual development. But a recognition of the Oedipus complex in essence, it seems to me, as demonstrated in the works already referred to and those of Westermarck (75) and Marcuse (41) to mention no others, is inevitable. For while we are today far removed from the necessity of being under the restraint of incest taboos, such as described by Freud (24) or of the curse of Deuteronomy (6), we are all struggling under the constraint of our moral, religious, ethical and aesthetic codes with the Titan within us.

We are compelled to realize the truth of Dr. White's (77 p. 147) statement,

That in the life history of every individual who grows to adulthood there comes a time when he must emancipate himself from the thralldom of the home. He must break away from his infantile moorings, and go forth into the world of reality and win there a place for himself. This is not to be understood to mean that he must simply physically leave the home . . . but he must leave it in his feelings, he must put aside his childhood, put away his infantile attachments and conquer his own world. While this is necessary it is extremely painful and many persons never accomplish it. They are the future neurotics.

I have already presented evidence, irrefutable in my opinion, of Strindberg's incestuous attachment to his mother. But even if we were to ignore it all, even if we attached no importance whatever to such a statement of his as this, viz. (69 p. 137), that sons are reared as if they were to be sons for life without a single thought of the fact that nature had the parental function in view, or again, that (op. cit. p. 152) in every young woman who aroused the love emotions in his bosom, he saw part of his mother; or again that, as he said later in life, he never could tell whether he was looking to women for a mother's love or for that of a mistress, I could point to even more conclusive evidence in his adult life and activities and particularly and naturally in his relation to the opposite sex.

We could, therefore, waive all evidence produced of his infantile object selection and begin with its obvious after effects about the time of puberty. Says Freud (23 p. 86):

Even those who have happily eluded the incestuous fixation of their libido have not completely escaped its influence. It is a distinct echo of this phase of development that the first serious love of the young man is often for a mature woman, and that of a girl for an older man equipped with authority, i. e., for persons who can revive in them the picture of the mother and the father . . . The man seeks above all the memory

picture of his mother as it has dominated him since the beginning of childhood. . . .

Now let us see how this corresponds with the facts in Strindberg's case. In chapter VII of *The Son of a Servant* he tells us that when he was fifteen years of age he fell in love with a woman of thirty. If, as he says (68 p. 131).

it really was love and not mere friendship.

In response to his own question as to how he came to love her he states (op. cit. p. 132 ff.) that it was not from one motive but from many.

She was the landlord's daughter and had, as such, a superior position. The house was well appointed and always open to visitors. She was cultivated, admired, managed the house and spoke familiarly to her mother; she could play the hostess and lead the conversation; she was also surrounded by men who courted her. She was emancipated without being a man hater; she smoked and drank, but was not without taste. She was engaged to a man whom her father hated and did not wish to have for a son-in-law. Her fiancé stayed abroad and wrote seldom. Among the visitors to her home were students, clerics, a District Judge, a man of letters, and townsmen who all hovered about her. John's father admired her, his stepmother feared her and his brothers courted her.

According to his description of her, she was tall and masculine and suffered from dropsy and Bright's disease. It seemed absurd to him to be in love with such a woman and yet he was in love with her for she had him firmly under her control.

After having described their first conversation he says (op. cit. p. 134):

After this she assumed an air of superiority and became motherly. This made a deep impression upon him, and when later she was teased because of her fondness for him she felt almost ashamed, banished all other feelings except that of motherliness and began to labor for his conversion, for she also was a pietist.

The following statement concerning his attitude towards her is significant (69 p. 127):

John never concentrated his thoughts on her body, he only noticed her eyes which were deep (dark?) and full of expression. Nor was it exactly the mother whom he worshipped in her, for he never longed to put his head in her lap, no matter how unhappy he was, as he always wished to

do in the case of other women. He also had a horror of touching her, not the horror of secret desire, but of aversion. He danced with her once, but never again. It was probably only friendship and her soul and body were masculine enough to make friendship possible.

This is no sign that she was a poor surrogate for the mother. It is rather a good example of vigorous unconscious resistance necessary to counteract his incestuous desires and thus only one of the many defence mechanisms characteristic of the neurotic.

Space forbids a detailed treatment of his psychic development so graphically described in volumes II and III of his autobiography (63, 62), covering the years of 1867-1877. It may be characterized by a single term: *Zerrissen*, the result of ten years of the most violent, almost super-human efforts to effect a catharsis, a discharge of the emotional content of the Unconscious. For while an almost endless number of factors helped to shape his life's course during this period—from eighteen years of age to twenty-eight—as well as later, his psycho-sexual fixation on the one hand and the imperative need of breaking its spell over him constituted that force *par excellence*, which at times threatened to extinguish his lights of reason and which drove him repeatedly to suicidal attempts, as recorded in *Jäsningstiden* and *I Röda Rummet*.

If we accept the theory (Jung's) that religious conflicts so characteristic of adolescence are symbolic of the sacrifice of the libido, *i. e.*, of infantile phantasies in favor of the larger adult life and its functions, then Strindberg's life during this period referred to was, psychologically speaking, largely an endeavor to return to a more primitive psychic level. At the same time it was the first real and partly successful attempt, as shown by the undercurrents of his juvenile dramatic sketches, *Fritänkaren*, *Hermione*, *I Rom*, *The Outlaw* and *Master Olof* to turn his mind outward from the realm of phantasy to that of reality.

But how unsuccessful he was in his endeavor to part with the past and to what an incredible extent his first serious steps were influenced by his infantile fixation is plainly to be seen in his marriage in 1877 to the Baroness Wrangel.

The union, as I have already pointed out, was an exceedingly unhappy one, and while this was the result of an unusually large number of factors attributable not alone to one but to both of the contrahents, I believe that the cause must largely be sought in Strindberg's Oedipus complex.

In his masterly analysis of *Hamlet*, Ernest Jones (35) has called attention to some of the results that may be caused by the complicated interaction between the Oedipus phantasies and other influences. He says:

If the awakened passion undergoes but little repression . . . the son may remain throughout life abnormally attached to his mother and unable to love any other woman, a not uncommon cause of bachelorhood. He may be gradually weaned from this attachment, if it is less strong, though it often happens that the weakening is incomplete, so that he is able to fall in love only with women that resemble the mother; the latter occurrence is a frequent cause of marriage between relatives and has been interestingly pointed out by Abraham (2a). The maternal influence may also manifest itself by imparting a strictly tender feminine side to the latter character. When the aroused feeling is intensely repressed and associated with shame, guilt, etc., the memory of it may be so completely submerged that it becomes impossible not only to revive it, but to experience any similar feeling, i. e., of attraction to the opposite sex. This may declare itself in pronounced misogyny, or even when combined with other factors, in actual homosexuality, as Sadger (52a) has shown.

Whether Strindberg may properly be said to belong to any of these categories remains to be seen. His mother was a plain woman, without education or aspirations, whose sphere was the home such as it was, and whose only ambition was to live for her husband and children. That type of woman Strindberg always leaned towards, in fact most of his *liaisons* previous to his marriage were with such women, and how completely he was under the influence of some of them may be seen in the autobiographical works to which I have referred above (62, 63, 68).

Out of his *Einstellung* to the mother developed on the one hand that deep, indestructible and unchangeable love of the opposite sex, which those of us who are not blinded by its ambivalent form of hatred of the type diametrically opposed to that of his mother, recognize without difficulty. He says himself (69 p. 152):

He adored . . . only those [girls] who were kind, and felt honored when he was well treated. The dashing ones, the flirts, he was afraid of. They looked as if they were in search of prey, as though they wanted to devour him.

And again (69 p. 128):

He longed to plunge into the whirlpool of life, he wanted to work, to support himself and marry. To marry was his dream, for in no other

way could he think of a union with a woman. It had to be legalized and hallowed.

But his social standing and his ambition, and above all his aesthetic nature formed a barrier between him and the essentially maternal type of woman. He states explicitly (62 p. 105):

He could not fall in love with a woman with coarse features, ugly nails and large feet. He wished to be able to look up to the woman he was to marry. What did this mean? Above him in intelligence no woman could stand. Hence he wished to look up to beauty, blood, social standing, wealth—all that which was not to be had. Thus he wanted to rise in the social scale. But in his conception of a woman worthy of his love also entered: womanhood, motherliness, just those things which man looks up to because he lacks them, the complement which made woman superior to man.

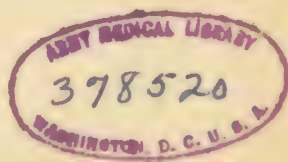
We can now understand in part why the handsome Baroness Wrangel, née von Essen, made such an impression on him at their first meeting. She was his romantic ideal combining in herself all those qualities which he regarded so essential. And so, from the first time that their eyes met, he was a lost man.

From a psycho-analytic point of view, this choice of love object is highly interesting and significant. Here as in his former relations with the opposite sex, certain rather veiled motives, not mentioned by Jones, play an all important part.

In his important contribution to the psychology of love life entitled: *Über einen besonderen Typus der Objektwahl beim Manne* Freud (20) describes a type of neurotic lover to which Strindberg conforms very closely. A representative of this type first of all never directs his love to a woman that is free, i. e., she must either be married or engaged or related to another man in some other way. He says:

The first of these love conditions may straightway be characterized as specific. As soon as it is found we may look for the presence of the other characteristics of this type. We can call it the condition of the wronged third party (des geschädigten Dritten).

The second condition which often coincides with the first is that the chaste, trustworthy woman, has no power of attraction for this type of lover. Her reputation must be of a questionable character. The first condition offers an opportunity for the gratification of the antagonistic feelings towards the man to whom



the woman stands in the relation of wife, fiancée, a friend or what not; the second makes possible that jealousy which is an absolute necessity for this type of neurotic lover. Only when they can be jealous, says Freud, does their love life reach its acme. But strange to say, they are not as a rule jealous of the lawful husband or the lover, but of others who may be attracted by the woman, or whom they may suspect of evil designs.

In pronounced cases the neurotic intruder does not show any desire of possessing the woman alone but rather seems to be satisfied with this three-cornered affair.

Freud tell us that one of his patients whose "lady" had caused him intense suffering by such a *liaison*, had no objection to her marriage to the other man, nor did he show any signs of jealousy. In another typical case, however, the principal not only showed intense jealousy, but actually urged the woman to sever connections with her husband.

Not infrequently the soteric aspect of the love is conspicuous. The man is convinced that the woman depends upon him and that without him she is bound to sink to a deplorable level of immorality. All the while he may, however, be making the most elaborate and ingenious preparations for her seduction.

This peculiarly conditioned choice of the love object Freud refers to as the result of a severe and protracted infantile fixation on the mother. The proof of it is best seen in the case of the wronged third party, who is none but the father of the neurotic lover with whom the latter vies for the possession of the wife and mother.

The second condition, that of the questionable reputation, (*Dirnencharakter*) while apparently diametrically opposed to the content of the mother complex proper, is easily explained if we only remember that the content of the Conscious and the Unconscious are distinct psychic phenomena which, however, under certain conditions may coincide or fuse entirely. It is being explained, therefore, on the basis or principle of repressed memories on the part of the individual from the pre-pubertal periods and the later initiation into the secrets of legalized, as well as illicit sexual relations of the sexes.

All this is exemplified to a remarkable degree in Strindberg's early love-life, certain phases of which I have already discussed, and as described by himself particularly in the work entitled *In*

*the Red Room*⁶. But the best illustration is afforded us by the Strindberg-Wrangel affair.

Here we have a woman who lacks none of the qualifications essential for a *rapprochement*. She was the (adored?) wife of a titled captain of the Royal Guards, the object at the same time of Strindberg's fear and admiration. He feared him (60 p. 134) as a son of the people, a descendant of the middle classes, who cannot but be impressed with the insignia of the highest power of the land.

Whenever they met, says Lind-af-Hageby (40 p. 126),

the aristocracy of birth and the aristocracy of brain presented themselves to Strindberg in a juxtaposition which threw the superiority of the former into pleasant relief.

After a visit to the Guard-house where he felt the whole crushing weight of his ignominious parentage and humiliating inferiority he wrote (60 pp. 136-137):

As I saw him sitting there, the sword between his knees—a sword of honor, the hilt of which was ornamented with the initials and the crown of the royal donor—I felt strongly that our friendship was but an artificial one, the work of a woman who constituted the only link between us.

Previous to this visit at the Guard-house the Baron had called on Strindberg in the Royal Library. Strindberg describes his feelings toward the Captain in the following words (op. cit. pp. 50-51):

Oppressed on account of the insignia of his rank . . . his belt and parade uniform, I endeavored to restore equilibrium by exhibiting my knowledge. But I only succeeded in making him restless. Sabre and pen; the nobleman down the bourgeois up. Perhaps the far-sighted woman instinctively knew to whom the future belonged when later to the advantage of her unborn children she chose a father who belonged to the coming nobility of intelligence.

Initially Strindberg's passion for the Baroness—the Madonna with the Child, the Virgin Mother—was ideal and pure, he assures us. He writes (60 p. 39):

In a word I adored her without a desire of possessing her. I adored her such as she was: as wife and mother . . . as the wife of *this* man, the mother of *this* child. And in order that I might do this, in order that I might realize this happiness, the presence of the husband seemed

⁶This work must not be confused with *The Red Room*.

to me inevitably necessary. For without the husband, I said to myself, she would be a widow, and I am not sure whether I could have worshipped her under such circumstances. Perhaps as my own, as my wife? No. First of all such a frivolous thought could not enter my mind, and then she would have been married to me and not the wife of *this* man, the mother of *this* child, the mistress of *this* house. Yes, such as she was, not otherwise. Yes, it was the sacred memories that clung to this house,⁷ it was also the innate inclination of a representative of the lower classes to admire noble, blue blood . . . and thus the worship of this woman resembled in every particular the religion which I had discarded: To worship, to sacrifice myself, to suffer without the slightest hope of gaining anything else than the enjoyment of worship, of self-sacrifice, of suffering.

And now began his Madonna cult. He made his mansard into a temple of worship. He writes (op. cit. pp. 60-61):

It had become a habit of mine to draw the curtains at sunset, to arrange the flower-pots in a semi-circle and to place by the lamp in the centre the picture of the Baroness. In this picture she appeared as a young mother with indescribably pure but somewhat stern features, her handsome head being crowned by a wealth of blond hair. On a table near her stood her little daughter . . . Before this picture I composed the letters "To my Lady friend" which I always sent to the Baroness' address on the following day. This was the only outlet for my literary inclinations and in them I gave expression to the innermost secrets of my soul.

But a few hours later his psychic tension became too great and a single thought of her produced loathing in him and she became the fiendish creature, the beast from whose influence he must free himself at all cost. He felt that he was being slowly entangled in a family drama and reproached himself for playing a reckless part in a farce that was bound to assume tragic proportions.

Once during such an alternate spell of hatred of the Madonna he fled to the club (op. cit. p. 67). After having been greeted by his friends he drained half a litre of Arrack Punch and then in

⁷As by the irony of Fate, Captain Wrangel and his family occupied the former residence of the Strindberg family in Norra Allén. Of his first visit to the Wrangel's he writes (op. cit. p. 31):

How fatal. It was the house of my parents in which I had spent the hardest years of my youth, in which I had experienced all the inner storms of the advent of manhood, the first communion, the death of my mother and the coming of the stepmother. Seized by a sudden feeling of uneasiness, I felt tempted to turn around and flee. I feared to find once more all the misery of my adolescence . . .

At the sound of the bell, I expected that my father would open the door for me.

high-sounding verses and anatomical terms he celebrated

woman as the personification of the inability of man to enjoy himself alone (*sich mit sich selbst zu amüsieren*).

He became intoxicated with his drastic speech, with the profanation of the Madonna, the pathological product of ungratified desires. He unchained his whole hatred against the false idol and was full of bitter hopelessness. He writes (*op. cit.* pp. 68-69):

In the spirit I see the adored one before me giving herself up to every excess of her conjugal love only in order to divert herself from the bore-some torment of existence. To her, the absent one, I direct all the infamies, attacks, insults of my blind rage, since I cannot possess her, recoiling from such a crime.

The Bacchanalian revelry finally came to an end, and then there rang out in chorus, like a single voice:

“Forward. To the women.”

He adds (*op. cit.* p. 70):

Half an hour later the band broke in upon a horde of girls. Now stought was ordered, fires kindled in the stoves and the Saturnalia began with living pictures.

Fearing his own weakness and the irresistible power of his infatuation for the Baroness, he now decided to flee from Sweden and accordingly embarked on a steamer bound for Havre. But before the vessel had reached the Baltic, his “inexpressible longing to see *her* again” took complete possession of him. He was powerfully affected by the leaden October sky and the naked islands of the Archipelago. Like an imprisoned animal he ran about the decks of the steamer seeking some person to whom he might tell his sorrow. He suffered physical pain, like a permanent toothache, but he could not localize it. The farther the vessel advanced, the greater became his psychic tension. He felt that the umbilical cord which united him to home, fatherland, family and *her* was about to snap. He was frightened by his own fear which he attributed to premature birth or an attempt at abortion on the part of his mother, a practice which is common enough, he says, in large families.

While thus straying on the decks of the vessel he came upon

an old lady who told him that he looked unwell and who finally gave him some medicine and put him to bed (op. cit. p. 105). He writes:

How well she knew how to do it. A motherly warmth which the children seek at the breast of their mother emanated from her. The tender touch of her hand calmed me, and in two minutes gentle sleep took possession of me. I imagined that I was a nursing-baby and saw how my mother tenderly busied herself about my bed. . . .

but soon the mother's image fused with the handsome countenance of the Baroness and that of the compassionate lady, and then he lapsed into a state of unconsciousness. He slept.

When he awoke he felt that he had to get back to the Baroness or go mad. He writes (op. cit. pp. 110-111):

Indeed, my love was of the right quality because I had relapsed into a state of childhood, obsessed by a single idea, as single image, by an overwhelming feeling that had rendered me void of resistance so that I could do nothing but sob.

Accordingly he persuaded the Captain of the necessity of being put ashore. It was done. But no sooner was his wish fulfilled than he recognized the hopelessness and disgrace of his condition and determined to end his life, for life without her was impossible. He says (op. cit. p. 113):

But with the cunning of a madman, I decided to get some satisfaction out of my death by contracting pneumonia or a similar fatal disease, for in that case, I argued, I should have to lie in bed for some time: I could see her again and kiss her hand in saying goodbye forever . . .

After having engaged a room in the Village Inn, he returned to the shore to carry out his plan. The coast was precipitous and the water deep, everything just as he wanted it to be. In the cold October gale he undressed and leapt into the surf. He swam about in the water until he was nearly exhausted and then returned to the cliff. He sat down on the rock in order to allow the cold wind to do its deadly work, but was finally compelled to climb a tree, since it was extremely difficult for him to remain in one place. He remained in the tree until he was convinced that he had attained his end and then he hastily dressed himself.

Upon reaching the village, he immediately sent a dispatch to the Baron telling of his sudden illness and the cancelling of the trip. Then he went to bed, rang for the maid and told her to

send for a physician. Since there was no physician in the village the Apothecary sent the patient an opiate with directions not to take too much as the contents were enough to kill a man. Strindberg took it all in one draught, rolled the quilt about himself and soon went to sleep.

In the morning he awoke after a night of *gorgeous dreams* and in his joy of being alive there was only one discord: his shameful acts of yesterday. He now began to plan his trip with the next steamer. While doing so the Baron and the Baroness appeared on the scene and Strindberg all but fell on the lady's neck in the presence of her husband. Her presence immediately restored his equilibrium. We read (op. cit. p. 120):

She treated me like a child. And this role of mother was very becoming to her. With the sweetest words of flattery she spoke of me as "he", wrapped me in a shawl, placed a napkin before me at the table, poured the wine in my glass and decided what I was to do. She was all mother.

His attempt to free himself from the Baroness was not a success although the measures to which he resorted were severer than those which resulted in the separation from a former mistress (62 p. 75ff).

He returned to Stockholm and the old relations were resumed. In spite of the most phenomenal resistance he finally made his declaration of love. One day they met in the National Museum of Fine Arts and in the shadow of the statue of Psyche he implored her to take the final step and leave her faithless husband. She, now realizing the seriousness of her position, reminded him of the brother-sister compact. To this he answered (60 p. 159 ff):

"To the devil with the childish brother-sister compact."

" . . . man and wife, beloved and mistress. I adore you, your body and mind, your blond locks and honest soul, the smallest shoes in Sweden and your straightforwardness, your eyes . . . your charming smile, white stockings and red garters" . . .

"But Sir" . . .

"Yes, noble Lady. I have seen everything. I will bite your neck, I warn you that I will smother you with my warm kisses, crush you in my arms. Yes, I am strong as a god and will consume you entirely. You think I am weak. No, I am the imaginary sick man, or rather the hypocrite. Be on your guard against the sick lion, don't go into its cave, it will love you to death. Off with that hateful mask. I desire you, as I have done from the first time I saw you. What do I care about the friendship of this dear Baron. I, the bourgeois, the provincial, disinherited one. He hates me and I curse him."

And she went into the lion's den. In his mansard, the one-time temple of pure adoration he seduced her after having alleged an organic defect, which, if it did not render him sterile, made him practically harmless.

Soon afterwards divorce proceedings were begun and the Baroness had to desert her husband in order to be free. She went to Copenhagen and induced Strindberg, after much resistance on his part, to accompany her, if only a few miles outside of the capital. Finally he consented. But the misogynist had already supplanted the idolater. A quarrel began between them before the train pulled out of the station. He felt the noose tighten around his neck. The Baroness wept and talked of nothing but her love for him. He rebelled and felt a wild desire, he tells us, to throw himself out of the car window and thus escape a prison where he was being watched by an enemy, struggling helplessly in the clutches of a sorceress. He suffered all the terrors of a nightmare and cursed his existence.

But all of a sudden the Baroness, feigning exhaustion, put her feet on the upholstered seat and Strindberg was on his knees begging her forgiveness. He had seen her adored feet (op. cit. p. 189).

At Katrineholm they parted. Like a mother she kissed him, made the sign of the cross and entrusted him to God's keeping. Having left her he felt greatly relieved, but in the Village Inn, where he was to spend the night, he broke down feeling that he could not live without her. He made the following confession (op. cit. p. 190):

I love her, love her such as she revealed herself in the moment of parting: and the remembrance of the first days of our acquaintance rises up within me, when she—wife and mother at the same time—gently and tenderly caressed and fondled me like a little child. And so I love her, desire her passionately for a wife.

Is that an unnatural impulse? Am I the product of the caprice of nature? Are my feelings those of a degenerate, since I am in possession of my mother? Is this unconscious incest of the heart?

Then he sat down to write a letter in which he prayed to God for her safety. The first part of a *Fool's Confession* ends as follows:

Her last embrace has brought me back to God, and under the influence of her last tears, of which there are still traces in my beard, I renounce

the new faith which stands for the evolution of mankind. The first halting place on the downward path of a man has been reached, the other will follow naturally even to insensibility, to the verge of madness.

After her return from Copenhagen, Strindberg, eager as he was to get away, not only from the one-time Virgin Mother who now inspired him with disgust, but also from the *repulsive heap of offal*—the divorce proceedings—left for Paris. Very likely this would have been the end of their relations. But while there he received a letter from the Baroness saying that she expected to be a mother before long and begged him to return and save her from dishonor. Strindberg immediately returned and the marriage was solemnized on December 31, 1877. Shortly afterwards a little girl was prematurely born. She died a few days later.

The remainder of *A Fool's Confession* is the story of the first ten years of his married life⁸. No sooner was he legally joined to this woman than he began to suspect her of intercourse with other men. First of all he suspected the former husband, then the family physician, and finally he discovered that she had not only illicit relations with men, "but even extends her natural desires in *amor lesbicus* to her own sex." (31 p. 221).

A pug dog also came in for a generous share of violent hatred and threatened to break up the household. Finally in the year of 1883 he left Sweden on account of poor health—a voluntary flight into a state of neurosis—but primarily in order to escape the imaginary bad reputation of his wife in the capitol. But whether they were in Sweden or on the Continent was immaterial to her. Her conduct continued to be the same and he suffered unspeakable torments. The only defence mechanism that he could fall back upon was to move from place to place, from country to country, in order to prevent her from meeting her women friends. And so they moved from France into French Switzerland, from there into German Switzerland, then to Bavaria and finally to Denmark and Sweden where they arrived in 1889.

Several times during these years of psychic agony, of an unceasing rhythmical vacillation between eruptive fits of the most glowing love and maniacal adoration on the one hand and utter disgust and hatred on the other of the hermaphrodite, as he

⁸First *avant-propos* in the French edition (*Plaidoyer d'un Fou*) of 1894 is dated 1887. At the end of the volume we read: Septembre 1887—Mars 1888.

called her, he made up his mind to die, so he fled from her and wandered upon the highways of the Continent weeping like a lost child. One day he found himself in Vienna. He had left his wife and children with the firm determination of returning no more, but as usual, he changed his mind. The City seemed like a tomb to him and he went about the streets, he tells us, like a corpse. Everywhere he saw her, continually he dreamed of her and planned for her. In the Belvidere he stood for an hour before the Venus of Guido Reni, resembling his adored wife in every respect, and all of a sudden he felt an irresistible longing for her person, packed his grip and returned suddenly. He was convinced of being bewitched by her and that there was no escape.

The homecoming on such occasions was always a great event and the happiness intense for a few hours, but then the storm broke loose once more. Yet no matter how great the estrangement, no matter how firmly convinced he was of her perversities, her malice and unfaithfulness, he was ever ready to flee to her as a child to its mother, to confess his faults and to seek forgiveness.

After a serious attack of mental suffering while sojourning in French Switzerland, he writes, as it seems, fully aware of the fact that he was suffering from persecutorial mania (60 p. 293):

Why this mania? I am pursued, therefore, it is very logical to consider oneself persecuted. In short, I relapse into my childhood state and in my exceptional weakness I spend my time on a sofa; my head rests in the lap of Maria, my arms encircle her waist as in the *Pietà* of Michael Angelo. I press myself to her bosom, call myself her child, the man changes himself into a child, the wife becomes his mother She is the female spider who devours the male after the act of copulation.

The mental condition of Strindberg during the period referred to has been discussed by a number of qualified as well as unqualified writers. Most of them are of the opinion that Strindberg suffered from some form of insanity or other. Dr. William Hirsch (31 p. 220) in his *Genius and Degeneration* has diagnosed his case as *paranoia simplex chronica*, largely on the basis of the story of his first marriage. He says (op. cit. p. 222):

It is a manifest case of jealous insanity. The kind of disease is, however, essentially completed by the nature of the description; or what is more probable, there is a delusion of grandeur. He always speaks of himself as the "great poet", the "renowned scholar", etc. In one place he says that people are jealous of his talent and, therefore, might put him out of the way, which is a characteristic manifestation of delusion of persecution.

After having reminded us of the fact that the so-called referential ideas are among the most important symptoms of such maladies, he continues:

The patients refer all that goes on about them to themselves. In every look, in every harmless remark of a stranger, they fancy they detect a hidden slight intended for them. Whatever is said in their hearing they connect with their own individual selves, and find in the simplest things strong confirmation of their delusions. If people stand up in a shop, it is because they are present. If anybody in the street spits he means to do it at them. All the articles in the newspapers are meant to apply to them. In short, everything that happens has reference to them.

As a remarkable example of such referential ideas, Dr. Hirsch quotes the following passage from Strindberg's *A Fool's Confession* (60 p. 306), which Strindberg wrote after having read Ibsen's *Wild Duck*:

It was a drama of the famous Norwegian blue-stockings, the inventor of the equality madness. How the book fell into my hands, I could not say. But now everything was clear and gave occasion for the worst suspicions concerning the reputation of my wife. The plot of the drama is as follows: A photographer (a nickname I had earned from my novels drawn from real life), has married a person of doubtful repute, who had formerly been the mistress of a great proprietor. The woman supports the household from a secret fund which she derives from her former paramour. In addition to that, she carries on the business of her husband, a good for nothing, who spends his time in drinking in the society of persons of no consequence. Now, that is a misrepresentation of facts committed by the reporters. They were informed that Maria (Strindberg's wife) made translations, but they did not know that it was I who gratuitously corrected them and paid over to her the sums received for them.

Matters become bad when the poor photographer discovers that the adored daughter who comes before her time into the world, is not his child, and that the wife had warned him when she induced him to marry her. To complete his disgrace, the husband consents to accept a large sum as indemnity from the former lover. By this I understand Maria's loan upon the Baron's security, which I endorsed after our marriage. But as for the birth of the daughter, I can see no trace of analogy, for my daughter was not born until two years after the wedding. But hold. The dead girl. There, I am on the track. The dead child which forced us to a marriage which otherwise would not have taken place.

I prepare a great scene for the afternoon. I wished to catch Maria in cross-examinations to which I wanted to give the form of a defence for us both. We had been equally attacked by the scare-crow of the masculinists, who had been paid for the pretty job.

From this work which describes in the smallest details the life and death-struggle of a man so plainly under the influence of his infantile phantasies as to be wholly unable to make the necessary adjustments in the realm of reality, let us turn to his famous naturalistic play *The Father*, where we shall encounter further evidence of that incestuous attachment to the mother, which I have pointed out in *A Fool's Confession*.

Concerning the play in question, Björkman (8 p. 57) has made the following statement, characteristic, not only of his own power of "psychological penetration," but of that of the average literary critic. He says:

The Father was Strindberg's supreme effort to symbolize the life and death-struggle between man and woman for such immortality as may be offered them by the child. The picture of that struggle is splendid but unfair. Man, as man, is given rational insight, while to woman is granted little more than low cunning. And as conscience is alive with reason, the victory falls to its unconscionable opponent. It may be paradoxical to express a regret that the sex problem should enter at all into this play—a play designed wholly to exhaust that very problem. But there is a psychological side to the work that has nothing whatever to do with sex, and this side would hold our interest just as firmly if the conflict were raging between two men. The corrosive power of suggestion is here shown with diabolical skill. It is a duel of souls, with words for weapons, and by a seed of doubt, sown in the right way, at the right moment, one of these souls is shattered and shattered as fatally as a warship when its magazine explodes.

If we compare this summary with Strindberg's defence of the play found in the famous preface to *Countess Julia* (66 Vol I) the conclusion is inevitable, viz., that Björkman belongs to a certain type of spectator therein described. I quote in part from this preface:

The simple brain will further be shocked by the fact that motives behind the actions are not simple and that there is not one view alone to be taken of it. An event in life—and this is a comparatively new discovery—is generally produced by a whole series of more or less deep seated motives, but the spectator chooses for the most part the one which is easiest for him to grasp, or the one most advantageous to the reputation of his judgment. Take a case of suicide for example. "Bad business", says the bourgeois. "Unhappy love", says the woman. "Sickness", says the disease-ridden man. "Shattered hopes", the bankrupt. But it is possible that the motives lay in all of these causes or in none and that the dead man hid the real one by putting forward another, which has thrown a more favorable light on his memory.

The Father is a tragedy in three acts which presents a heart-rending duel between a man and a woman for the possession of the soul of a child. The father is a captain of cavalry, serious minded, intellectual, studious and amiable. His wife is the incarnation of stupidity, malice and selfishness. In the choice of weapons and methods, by means of which she finally destroys her husband, she is nothing short of diabolically resourceful. The husband is passionately fond of his daughter Bertha, whom the women in the house all wish to bring up according to their own ideas. The mother-in-law wants to make her a spiritualist. Laura, the mother, wants her to become an artist. The governess wants her to become a Methodist, old Margaret, a Baptist, and the servant girl proposes that she join the Salvation Army. The Captain, who considers that he has the chief right to determine her future, is opposed in every one of his efforts to have it his own way.

In order to break the resistance of her husband, Laura administers the poison which unbalances the man's mind. She suggests that he is not the father of the child—and this immediately begins to trouble his conscience. Thereupon she informs the family physician that her husband is suffering from delusions as regards his fatherhood and that this thought is fast becoming an obsession. Later conversations with the physician confirm the captain's doubts and before long he is a raving maniac. Finally when his daughter also refuses to regard him as her father, the measure is full. He draws the revolver and the old nurse is sent in to calm him with stories and memories of childhood. While on this mission, she, the good old woman, in whom he had unlimited confidence, slips the strait-jacket on him, the raving lunatic. Subjugated, crushed, robbed of his faith in God and himself, the former strong, happy, influential man dies ignominiously, the victim of treacherous women.

In this rather unenviable role Strindberg has immortalized his first wife and at the same time the type of woman which she, according to Strindberg, represented. She is the man-eater, precisely the type of woman he feared in his youth and cursed throughout his life, the diametrically opposite of his own mother, whom, as we recall, he spoke of in *Married* (64 p. 12) as:

Her husband's truest friend, the only human being who had never been jealous or envious . . . and who had never contradicted him.

This woman is the destroyer of man (53 p. 44),

the personification of the demonical, the cruelly enticing Daughter of Earth, who with her fornication and caresses tries to destroy man.

The mentally deranged Captain says to his daughter (70 p. 66):

"You see, I am a cannibal and will eat you. Your mother wanted to eat me, but she did not succeed. I am Saturn who ate his children because it had been so prophesied that they should eat him. To eat or to be eaten? That is the question. If I do not eat you, you will eat me, and you have already shown me your teeth."

Those who are familiar with Strindberg's life and works, in part at least, and are able to deal with his unconscious motivation will realize that the play centers in the sex-problem and that the "corrosive power of suggestion" is but one of the many elements involved in it. The play is simply another *Fool's Confession* in dramatic form. It is more than that. It is full of mental imageries and memories of childhood. Margaret, the nurse, is none but the old wet-nurse, Christina, whom we know from *The Son of a Servant* (68, pp. 18-20). The discussion of the religious education of Bertha is taken directly out of Strindberg's own childhood. The whole repulsive atmosphere of the play is a cross between that of his paternal home and his own married life, ruined, according to himself, by a woman who had nothing in common with him, who squandered his income, whose immorality was a constant source of worry to him, who gossiped about his mental condition and planned to have him committed to the insane asylum (60 pp. 263, 265, 275, 291). The subject matter of *The Father* is, therefore, taken very largely, as I have already stated, out of his own conjugal life, and the same may be said almost exclusively of all of his naturalistic plays.

The play in question justly raises the question not only of his sanity, but it affords us further evidence of his *Einstellung* to his mother. Already in 1912 Karin Michaelis (43 p. 32) is reported to have endeavored to bring Strindberg's misogyny which is so akin to that of the Euripidean Hippolytos into *rapport* with his own infantile fixation on the mother. The point is indeed well taken.

In Act I, page 21 (70a) he says to the nurse:

"You have always been, as it were, a mother to me."

In the same act p. 30, the following conversation occurs:

Captain:

Can you explain to me why you women treat an old man as if he were a child?

Nurse:

I don't understand it, but it must be because all you men, great and small, are women's children, everyone of you.

Captain:

But no women are born of men. Yes, but I am Bertha's father. Tell me, Margaret, don't you believe it? Don't you?

Nurse:

Lord, how silly you are. Of course you are your own child's father.

In Act II, page 48, after he has implored his wife to tell him who is Bertha's father and after his wife has said:

"I will swear by God and all that I hold sacred that you are Bertha's father."

He is still in doubt and continues:

"I implore you as a wounded man begs for a death blow to tell me all. Don't you see that I am helpless as a child? Don't you hear me complaining as to a mother? . . . Yes, I am crying although I am a man . . . Why should not a man complain, a soldier weep?"

Laura:

Weep, then, my child, as if you were with your mother once more. Do you remember when I first came into your life, I was like a second mother? Your great, strong body needed nerves; you were a giant child that had either come too early into the world, or perhaps was not wanted at all.

Captain:

Yes, that is how it was. My father's and my mother's will was against my coming into the world, and consequently I was born without a will. I thought I was completing myself when you and I became one and, therefore, you were allowed to rule, and I, the Commander at the Barracks and before the troops, became obedient to you, grew through you, looked up to you as to a more highly gifted being, listened to you as if I had been your undeveloped child.

Laura:

Yes, that is the way it was, and, therefore, I loved you as my child.

But you know, you must have seen, when the nature of your feelings changed and you appeared as my lover that I blushed, and your embraces were joy to me that was followed by a remorseful conscience, as if my blood had been ashamed. The mother became the mistress. Abominable.

Captain:

I saw it, but I did not understand. I believed that you despised me for my unmanliness and I wanted to win you as a woman by being a man.

Laura:

Yes, but that was the mistake. The mother was your friend, you see, but the woman was your enemy, and love between the sexes is strife.

In the last Act page 72, after the nurse has put the strait-jacket on him he says to her:

"What have you given me for a pillow, Margaret? It is so hard, so cold. Come and sit near me. There. May I put my head on your knee? So. This is warm. Bend over me so that I can feel your breast. Oh, it is sweet to sleep against a woman's breast, a mother's or a mistress' but the mother's is sweetest."

But besides this further proof of Strindberg's incestuous fixation furnished by the play in question, another trait of his neurotic, if not paranoid condition, stands out in a bold though indistinct relief.

It has been pointed out by Freud and other prominent psychiatrists and psychoanalysts that an incestuous fixation on the mother (or the father) involves a host of other abnormal psychic *penchants* on the part of the individual, manifesting themselves in an almost endless variety of perversions and phobias.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Strindberg's jealousy finds an expression in doubt as to whether he is the father of his daughter Bertha or not. At the end of Act III Laura asks him shortly before he expires, if he does not want to see his child, and to this he makes the following reply, which Rank considers as very significant (70a p. 72):

"My child? A man has no children, it is only woman who has children, and, therefore, the future is hers when we die childless."

The unmanly attitude towards the opposite sex which is so strikingly noticeable also in other works of Strindberg—more particularly in *A Fool's Confession*—may perhaps justly be considered as evidence of a homosexual trend. Dr. G. Stanley Hall lately raised this question and as a result of it, the Strindberg

problem has become even more complicated than before. His suspicion of such a status is well founded.

Rank (47 p. 33) does not hesitate in pointing to it as a distinct paranoid sign that challenges comparison with the famous case of Dr. Schreber, analyzed by Freud (21) so admirably in *Jahrb.*, III, Vol. 3, 1912.

Schreber's delusion was, as we remember, that he had been changed into a woman. It culminated in his belief that he had been chosen to redeem the world and to restore the forfeited blessedness of humanity. God had inspired him directly to this end just as he did in the case of the Prophets of yore. In order to be able to fulfil his mission he had to be changed into a woman. This metamorphosis took place much against his own will. In his own opinion he was a wonder in the eyes of God and man. The transformation of his body was a most miraculous process. It amounted to a complete disintegration and for long periods of time he lived without stomach, lungs, intestines, throat, bladder, etc., until, through the agency of God, his femininity was realized. This body would in due time be fertilized by God and so bring forth a new race on earth. Then, Schreber would be able to pass away, he himself redeemed as well as mankind.

Freud's analysis rests upon the assumption verified in this case, as in so many others, that a wish phantasy presupposes a privation, a want or an ungratified desire on the part of the individual. Schreber's most ardent desire had been to have children and particularly a son, who would have made good the loss of fathers and brothers, and constituted the object of his homosexual tenderness. The idea must, therefore, have presented itself to him that this desire might be realized more assuredly, if he were a woman. Accordingly he reverts to his infantile life, assumes the female *Einstellung* to his father imago and thus through delusions of grandeur and persecution he accomplishes his unconscious purpose—a defence against the homosexual impulse.

The question is now first of all: Is there anything in Strindberg's life besides what is found in his play *The Father*, to warrant such an assumption? With my slight knowledge of psychiatry I am far from qualified to judge, but a reading of Freud's analysis of Schreber has convinced me that, if Strindberg suffered from paranoia, it was a mild case in comparison with that of Dr. Schreber.

I do not disagree with Rank as regards Strindberg's attitude

towards the opposite sex, nor am I inclined to underestimate the importance of the paranoid utterances of the hero of the play. On the contrary I maintain that nothing in this play—and this applies moreover to everything that Strindberg has written—should be taken lightly. Every detail has a profound meaning.

Goethe has said somewhere that nothing in his writings was *aus der Luft gegriffen*, or something to that effect. The same is true of Strindberg, perhaps to an even greater extent. The most trivial situations in his writings are incidents out of his own life. To give a single illustration I wish to call attention to a passage in his play entitled *There are Crimes and Crimes* (65).

The opening scene represents an avenue of cypresses in the cemetery of Montparnasse in Paris. A woman in widow's weeds is praying at a grave and her child is playing nearby with withered flowers, picked up from a heap of rubbish. A watchman suddenly appears and warns the mother that flowers must not be picked in the cemetery.

Compare this with a passage in *The Son of a Servant* (68 pp. 20-21) where he tells of his visit to a church yard in Stockholm in which it was forbidden to walk on the grass or to touch the leaves of the trees and shrubs. On such an occasion his uncle had picked a leaf from the branch of a tree and a policeman was instantly on the spot. Such instances might be produced almost *ad infinitum* to show that every play, every poem, every novel that he has written deals above all other things with his own life and experiences.

One of his critics (30, p. 5) has said that he is the greatest subjectivist of modern times. His statement is eminently correct. It would be difficult to find another author of whom it might justly be said that the whole literary output is so largely autobiographical as in the case of Strindberg.

But let us return once more to the subject of homosexuality. Of the gross manifestations of sexual inversion such as characterized the life of Walt Whitman (50) for instance, there is not the slightest trace in Strindberg's life. At least, from the material at my disposal, I cannot point to a single instance. In his youth I fail to detect any abnormal leanings toward his own companions. That his relation to his youthful friends who figure in *The Son of a Servant* were normal in every respect, seems to me to be beyond a shade of doubt. The same is undoubtedly true of his associations with his friends at the University of Uppsala. His chum, Fritz, whom we know from *The Son of a Servant* was one of

his closest friends at that time, and that Strindberg admired him, he has himself confessed. Moreover they had experiences together that not infrequently fall to the lot of youths and even grown-ups.

In *Jäsningstiden* (63 p. 12) he relates how already while they were students at the Gymnasium they fell into the hands of the Secretary of one of the Foreign Legations in Stockholm who, to judge by the description, was a pederast. This same man whom he refers to as von X. also visited the boys during their first term at the University and the reunion resulted in a scandal on a small scale. After a trip to Old Uppsala where, as he writes,

their names are still to be found on the register as a reminder of an ill-chosen friend,

they were invited by von X. to a champagne dinner at a restaurant in the University City where they swore one another eternal friendship, embraced and kissed, according to the custom of the country represented by von X. But the scandal which I have referred to occurred at the railway station later in the evening when von X. was about to return to Stockholm. One of the young friends had followed him into the car where the old gentleman had become aggressive. Strindberg felt very indignant and now understood why they had been ridiculed by the other students while dining with him.

Any gushing friendship with representatives of his own sex I am not aware of in the whole life of Strindberg. The closest he came to such a friendship was probably during his stay in Berlin shortly after the separation from his first wife in 1892. I refer to the coterie *Zum Schwarzen Ferkel* and in particular to Stanislaw Przybyszewski, whom Strindberg (61, p. 67) speaks of as

My Russian friend, my pupil who called me "Father" because he owed all his culture to me, my Famulus, who called me "Master" and kissed my hands, whose life began where mine ended.

That this Polish author who also goes under the name of Stachu and also Popoffsky, was very much attached to Strindberg, far more so than Strindberg to him, is plain from Uddgren's (73 p. 68) comments. Stachu, like Strindberg, was an inveterate sentimentalist, and both did their level best during the transition period in Strindberg's abnormal psychic development to rid

themselves of their *Weltschmerz* by free and probably more or less continuous indulgence in Dionysian orgies.

I am well aware, however, that the absence of all external signs of homosexuality does not necessarily preclude the presence of such proclivities on the part of the individual. Man is, according to Freud (23 p. 7) bisexual by constitution and nature and only becomes monosexual in the course of development. Freud says (21 p. 53).

Also Schreber, whose delusion culminates in a homosexual wish phantasy that cannot possibly be ignored showed during the time he enjoyed health, according to all reports, no signs of homosexuality in the vulgar sense of the word.

If we accept Dr. Hirsch's (31 p. 220) diagnosis of Strindberg based on *A Fool's Confession*, we may assume with some degree of certainty that Strindberg was homosexual. Dr. Hirsch was fully convinced that Strindberg suffered from *paranoia simplex chronica*. A careful study of the symptoms of Strindberg's malady has confirmed me in my belief that more importance must be attached to Dr. Hirsch's judgment in the matter than to that of Dr. Rahmer (46 p. 26) whose diagnosis reads as follows:

According to my opinion it was melancholia, and first of all the typical melancholia moralis with a desire for seclusion, indefinite fear, thoughts of death, ideas of suicide and false notions of imaginary transgressions. Later on at the further development of the complex of symptoms, there was added praecordial anguish accompanied by attacks of raptus melancholicus followed by chimerical imageries (Wahnideen) and sense delusions (Sinnestäuschungen). In this complex of symptoms and in its course it is a typical case (Schulfall) of melancholia which at the height of its development shows itself as melancholia daemomaniaca.

This diagnosis has been criticised by Dr. Tretow (71) of Stockholm, as unsatisfactory. Dr. Lange (39) of Tübingen rejects it entirely. I must confess that even before I came across this last mentioned criticism, the result of Dr. Rahmer's pathographic study impressed me as superficial because of the fact that the analyst had disregarded entirely that period of Strindberg's life upon which I have based my attempt at analysis—his childhood, youth and adolescence.

Dr. Lange attacks Rahmer for the very same reason. He takes the latter to task on the basis of his own statement (46 p. 6)

that an exhaustive psychiatric analysis of the entire biographical material would take him (Rahmer) too far afield.

and insists that scientific thoroughness never yet has led the investigator too far in search of the truth. Dr. Lange supports Dr. Rahmer, however, in his belief that Strindberg did not suffer from paranoia. While he offers no solution of the problem, Dr. Lange is evidently of the opinion that Strindberg was subject to periodic attacks of manic-depressive insanity due to organic disease of the brain (39 p. 81).

Since these are questions pertaining exclusively to psychiatry, I must leave the argument open. But if, as I have already said, we accept Dr. Hirsch's diagnosis, which undoubtedly is as worthy of consideration as those of Drs. Lange and Rahmer, we are justified in assuming that Strindberg's crises, both that of the period covered by *A Fool's Confession* and that of *The Inferno*, stand in a very close relation to sexual inversion.

Ferenczi (15 p. 132) says:

It has become evident that the paranoiac mechanism is set in action as a defence against all possible attachments of the sexual hunger, but according to the observations made up to the present, is directed only against homosexual choice of objects.

And again (op. cit. p. 133):

The observation of several cases . . . seems to justify the surmise that in the pathogenesis of paranoia, homosexuality plays not a chance part but a most important one, and that paranoia is perhaps nothing else at all than disguised homosexuality.

While it cannot be my purpose to decide the question as to whether Strindberg suffered from a mild form of paranoia rather than from other forms of mental derangement, I cannot refrain from calling attention to some of the symptoms of this disease as characterized by Kraepelin (Defendorf, 11 p. 316 ff.).

First of all the disease is apt to develop between the age of twenty-five and forty which was the case with Strindberg. It develops on a defective constitutional basis. This may be either congenital or acquired and in a large percentage there is defective heredity. The early life of the individual is marked by eccentricities, he may be moody, dreamy or seclusive. It is further marked by sexual perversions, aptitude for study and mental activity in special fields. Some patients are abnormally bright,

others flighty, entering into many projects which they are unable to pursue with success. The starting point is often formed by exciting causes such as acute illness, excessive mental stress, shock, business reverses, deprivation and disappointment.

The development of the psychosis is gradual and very insidious. The patient becomes irritable, suspicious, discontented and may suffer from insomnia. Imaginary slights become a source of worry and suspicion that they are not accidental. He becomes distrustful and seeks evidence of unfriendliness and nurses the feeling that he is being purposely neglected. All patients suffering from the effects of this disease are morbidly sensitive. Harmless jokes, smiles, accidental nods of the head have a special reference to themselves. Items in the papers, as already pointed out by Dr. Hirsch, are indicative of intrigue against them. A passerby cannot light his cigar, cough or walk behind them without being suspected of sinister designs.

Out of this mental state develop persecutory delusions. Everybody and everything conspires against them. Their friends and supposed enemies cause them alarm. Their answers, if interrogated, show that they are guilty. They are afraid of being slowly poisoned and put out of the way by electricity. In due time and in connection with these delusions, expansive delusions may also appear. Since these patients cannot but attract a great deal of attention they soon begin to cast about for the reason of this. This they find in the property that they possess, in personal charm, imaginary noble descent, or else they may come to the conclusion that they had been born for a special mission.

Sometimes these delusions may assume the form of exaggerated self-importance. Love and religion play an all important part in many cases. Hallucinations are always present but rarely persist throughout the whole course of the disease. Auditory hallucinations are the most frequent—first of indefinite noises, later they assume all forms, such as laughter, curses uttered at them, etc. Visual hallucinations also occur. Those of general sensibility are very frequent, such as pulling of the hair, drafts of air, irritation of the skin by poisonous powders, etc.

As for the emotional attitude we are informed that it stands in direct relation to the character of the delusion. In some cases the patient is irritated by his persecutors, he is shy and excitable, even despondent. In other cases the persecution is tolerated and regarded as essential to his spiritual welfare. But all of these

patients sooner or later become arrogant, proud and dogmatic.

In conduct the paranoiacs appear quite normal for a considerable time, except for the eccentricities as characterized above. Frequently they assume the offensive against their enemies and suspects. They are then apt to commit murder and often such an act is the first indication of their mental condition. For this reason the paranoiac is considered the most dangerous of the insane.

Psychiatrists claim that the course of the disease presents distinct periods which coincide with those of the evolution of the delusion. The first period is followed by the insidious onset, it is followed by the persecutory period (delusions of persecutions and hallucinations). Finally there follows the third and last stage, the so called ambitious period with a change of personality.

These are some of the symptoms of paranoia and they are all found in the life of Strindberg to a remarkable degree, particularly during the Inferno period, and if we agree with all those representatives of the medical profession who have recognized paranoid traits in Strindberg's malady, then he was a sexual invert.

But even if it could not be granted on technical grounds that Strindberg suffered from paranoia, there is evidence enough in his life to warrant his classification as a borderland case of sexual inversion.

In his *Bemerkungen über einen Fall von Zwangneurose*, Freud (18 p. 190), after having discussed the chronic parallelism of ungovernable love and hate for the same person—a most characteristic trait in Strindberg as we know—says, that such emotional manifestations are a most conspicuous sign of the compulsion neurosis. But not only in the neurosis. Such violent, alternate love and hate plays a great role in the pathogenesis of hysteria and paranoia.

Then there is the fetichism to which I have already referred and which, I believe, is universally regarded as a proof of homosexuality. The large number of clinical cases reported by Krafft-Ebing (38), Frank (16), Stekel (58, 59) and others confirm one in this belief.

Abraham (1) in his *Bemerkungen zur Psychoanalyse eines Falles von Fuss-und korsett-fetischismus* discusses a male patient whose mania terminated in a female attitude (Einstellung) to his father. The fetichistic phenomenon has been so well explained by Freud (23 p. 19 note) that I need not dwell upon it. Suffice

it to say that no matter how estranged Strindberg was with his first wife, the sight of her foot (shoe) or a bit of her stocking would always bring him to his knees (60 p. 189). He was thus plainly at the mercy of an aberrant sex impulse, itself conditioned in part at least, by the various impulses of his infantile eroticism and psycho-sexual fixation on his mother. But even in this case Strindberg forms a borderland case. For Freud (23 p. 19) has pointed out that to a certain extent, fetichism is normal,

especially during those stages of wooing when the normal sexual aim seems inaccessible or its realization is deferred.

The case becomes pathological only when the striving for the fetich takes the place of the normal sexual aim, or again, when the fetich disengages itself from the person concerned and itself becomes a sexual object.

Stekel (58 p. 372) argues that intense jealousy, Don Juanism, a preference for the delineation of female characters, phobias and delusions, onanism, fetichism of the hand, the foot, the ears, etc., all being symbols of the lacking phallus in women, are nothing but masks of homosexuality.

Furthermore he says (59 p. 268):

Fetichism is a substitute religion . . . It springs out of a compromise between an uncurbable sexuality and deep pietism. It affords the individual an opportunity for a more or less complete asceticism. Under the cover of diabolism and libertinage there hides a piety whose aims reach far beyond this life. The fetichist is in open rebellion against every form of authority, particularly against God to whom he secretly submits and whom he imagines he serves through special privations.

The same subject is discussed in his *Nervöse Angstzustände* (57) where he says that homosexuality is nothing but the successful defence mechanism of the infantile incest phantasy and other painful memories.⁹

That Strindberg who shows so many of the traits and tendencies discussed by these authors suffered from sexual inversion does not seem improbable. Those who are able to deal with the problem more efficiently than I am, would undoubtedly be able to produce even more convincing proofs. To me his inversions seem to be of the character which Freud (23 p. 2) has termed *amphigenous*, i. e., lacking in exclusiveness.

The term woman-hater which is the popular synonym for

⁹ See also Rivers, *Walt Whitman's Anomaly* pp. 29-30.

sexual invert was regularly applied to Strindberg during his lifetime, and was always greatly resented by him. In his *Zones of the Spirit* (Blåa böckerna, vol. 1) he writes (70 pp. 176-177):

There are things which one does not say every day, and one does not tell one's wife what her sex is composed of. But one has the right to put it on paper sometimes. Schopenhauer has done it the best, Nietzsche not badly, Péladan¹⁰ is the master; Thackeray wrote *Men's Wives*, but the book was ignored. Balzac has unmasked Caroline in the *Petites Misères de la Vie Conjugale*. Otto Weininger¹¹(74) discovered the deceit at the age of twenty; he did not wait for the consequent vengeance, but went his own way, i. e., died. I have said that the little child is a little criminal, incapable of self guidance, but I love children all the same. I have said that a woman is—what she is, but I have always loved some woman and been a father. Whoever, therefore, calls me a woman-hater is a block-head, a liar or a noodle. Or all three together.

Without attempting to go any further into the subject of sexual inversion which may or may not be a factor in Strindberg's life, let us now turn to that period in his career which marks his final and generally speaking successful effort at freeing himself from the bondage of the past—I mean the Inferno.

Uddgren (73 p. 59) believes that it began during the honeymoon of his second marriage in 1893. The careful student of Strindberg's life would probably point to *A Fool's Confession* as good evidence of its earlier inception.

It was, however, during his stay at Gravesend that he became subject to real visual hallucinations. The vision he had on London Bridge was indelibly stamped on his retina for the rest of his life.

Uddgren (op. cit. pp. 59-60) tells us that on a Sunday morning while on his way from Gravesend to London, Strindberg had arrived with one of the early trains and started to cross the bridge on foot. Suddenly it was full of people—an endless procession of penitents, who, clad in long gowns and with hoods over their

¹⁰Péladan (Joséphin, dit Le Sar), novelist and mystagogue, born at Lyons in 1859. He is the author of a number of books the most important of which are: *Femmes honnetes*, 1885, *le Vice Supreme*, 1886, *Curieuse*, 1886, *L'initiation sentimentale*, 1887, *A Cœur Perdu*, 1888, *Istar*, 1888, *La Victoire du Mari*, 1889, *Cour en Peine*, 1890, *L'androgynie*, 1891 *La Gynandre*, 1891. (La Grande Encyclopédie).

¹¹Strindberg greeted Weininger's book *Geschlecht und Charakter* with the following words: "Ein furchtbares Buch, das aber wahrscheinlich das schwerste aller Probleme gelöst hat," and then exclaimed: "Ich buchstabierte, aber Weininger setzte zusammen. Voilà un homme." (Cited by Probstin *Der Fall Otto Weininger*. Grenzfragen des Nerven und Seelenlebens, 28-35, 1904-1905).

heads passed by as noiselessly as shadows. Strindberg repeatedly dwelt on this day-dream of his which neither he nor Uddgren could interpret, but which psychoanalysis disposes of as a projection indicative of Strindberg's own will and ardent desire of shifting the battle of life to another level.

In November of the following year (1894) the crisis was well under way. His second wife, just like the first one, became an object of suspicion and apathy. After having seen her off at the North Railway Station in Paris he felt greatly relieved. He writes (61 p. 9):

As I entered the Café de la Régence I placed myself at the table where I used to sit with my wife, my beautiful jailer, who watched my soul day and night, guessed my secret thoughts, marked the course of my ideas and was jealous of my investigations into the unknown.

But he was not satisfied with being temporarily separated from his wife (op. cit. p. 12).

In a fit of righteous pride, in the passionate desire to do myself an injury I commit moral suicide by repudiating my wife and child in an unworthy, unpardonable letter. I give her to understand that I am involved in a new love affair. The blow goes home. My wife answers with a demand for separation.

From this time on Strindberg led the life of a solitary man, "guilty of suicide and assassination." He withdrew from his friends and soon began to consider himself the object of unjust persecution. At the same time he became aware of what he calls the Unknown Powers, which in the past had been placing obstructions in his path of progress. That is the reason, he claims, for his having become an atheist and now he challenged the Invisible One to wrestle with Him as Jacob did with God. After having sustained serious burns on his hands during chemical experiments carried on in his own room, and after having spent some time in the hospital, Strindberg moved into Hotel Orfila.

Uddgren who at that time resided in Paris states that it was known that Strindberg lived somewhere in the neighborhood of Hotel des Americains but that none of his friends dared call on him, and furthermore that the story went that he was out of his mind.

The fixed idea that harrassed him now was that his Polish friend Stachu had come to Paris to assassinate him. The reason for this was that Strindberg had been familiar with Mme. Stachu before her marriage. Strindberg's delusion was not broken until

authentic news from Berlin was placed before him to the effect that Stachu had been placed under arrest in the City just mentioned on a charge of having urged his wife to take her own life and the lives of their children. This she did. His fear and suspicion of the friend now turned into pity, and Uddgren who in the meantime had been discovered by Strindberg through mutual friends, was summoned to Hotel Orfila. Strindberg was now obsessed with another idea, *viz.*, that he had caused Stachu all his troubles. Uddgren found him nervous and in a state of humble resignation. There was nothing of that hybris (*ὕβρις*) in him, however, which he himself considered the only sin that the gods cannot forgive (73 p. 69).

While Uddgren's opinion as regards Strindberg's mental condition at this time was probably not of any greater importance than that of the average layman, it is interesting to know that to him Strindberg appeared to all intents and purposes quite normal. He had always been somewhat of a maniac and the most serious of all his manias had been and was, that of self-reproach. Uddgren says:

Besides in his scientific work he had gotten into a *cul de sac* where it was plain to him that he could not advance any further.

A partial retreat was unthinkable to Strindberg and so he began to tear up the foundation of his rationalism and to establish himself upon the rock bottom of his childhood faith. His reversion to orthodoxy was materially hastened by his relatives in Austria whom he visited during a period when his mental resistance was reduced to a minimum. After the release of Stachu the self-torture began with renewed vigor. He now suspected his Paris friends of being tools in the hands of the famous Pole, and this was possibly the reason why he attempted suicide on several occasions, considering his chances of escaping Stachu very slight. Each time something interrupted the operation and he was saved. One night later, however, he was convinced that Stachu was in the adjacent room attempting to kill him by means of poisonous gases and electric currents, and then he fled just as if he reserved for himself the right of taking his own life.

In July 1896 he suddenly disappeared from Paris and by way of Dieppe finally reached Ystad, Sweden. Here in the home of Dr. Eliasson he finally recovered and later went to Lund, Sweden, where he wrote his *Inferno* between May 3 and July 25, 1897.

In the fall of 1896, after having regained his mental poise under the treatment of Dr. Eliasson, he went to Austria to see his little daughter and relatives. When he took the two and one-half year old child in his arms he felt, he says, (61 p. 138) like Faust when he exclaimed, "The earth has me again."

Love for a child turns man into a woman; it is sexless and heavenly, as Swedenborg says. This is the beginning of my education for heaven. But I have not yet done penance enough.

Chapter IX of *The Inferno*, The Diary of a Damned Soul, opens with a dialogue characteristic of the conversation with his mother-in-law, which I cannot refrain from quoting, since it brings us face to face with Strindberg's chief conflict (op. cit. pp. 166-167):

My Mother-in-law:

What have you done in your former existence that Fate deals so rudely with you?

I:

Think! Remember a man who was first married to another man's wife, like myself, and who separated from her in order to marry an Austrian woman, as I did! Then this little Austrian woman is torn from him, just as mine has been from me, and their only child is kept in the Bohemian mountains, just as mine. Do you remember the hero of my romance *On the Open Sea*, who commits suicide on an island . . .

My Mother-in-law:

Enough!

I:

You don't know that my father's mother was called Neipperg . . .

My Mother-in-law:

Stop! Unhappy man!

I:

And that my little Christina resembles the greatest murderer of the century to a hair. Only look at her, the little tyrant, the man-tamer at two and one-half!

My Mother-in-law:

You are mad.

I:

Yes, and what sins have you women formerly committed, since your

lot is still harder than ours? See how justly I have called woman our evil angel . . .

My Mother-in-law:

To be a woman is twofold hell.

I:

And so woman is a twofold devil . . .

How far cured of his mental breakdown he was while on his visit at Dornach may be seen in Chapter X of *The Inferno*. His mother-in-law has informed him that he would not be well until Candlemas, when the sun returns once more. As yet it is only late autumn. He was still suffering from hallucinations of various kinds. One day, he tells us, there was a single clap of thunder over his head (op. cit. p. 185 ff). He felt alarmed and asked himself why he did not fall down, humiliating himself before the Eternal. He answered by saying that having been allowed to hear the voice of the Eternal, he felt almost on a level with the Lord, like an integral part of His personality, an emanation of His being, an organ of His organism. He writes (op. cit. pp. 186-187):

He needed me in order to reveal Himself; otherwise He would have sent a thunderbolt and struck me dead on the spot.

But frightened by his megalomania he quickly turned to the Bible and by chance opened and read the following verse by Job:

Wilt thou disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be justified? Has thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?

He now entertained no further doubt, the Eternal had spoken to him and he demanded of Him what His servant should do. There was no answer. He writes:

Good, I will humble myself before the Eternal who has humbled Himself to speak to His servant. But bend my knee before the mob and the mighty? Never!

His deliverance is practically effected through the instrumentality of the Seer, the Buddha of the North, Swedenborg, whom he had scorned as a fanatic in Uppsala about thirty years before (op. cit. p. 206).

A single word suffices to illuminate my soul, to scatter my doubts and vain fancies regarding my supposed enemies, electricians, black magic, etc., and this single word is "Devastatio."¹²

All my sufferings I find are described by Swedenborg—the feeling of suffocation (angina pectoris), constrictions of the chest, palpitations, the sensation which I call the electric girdle—all exactly correspond, and these phenomena, taken together, constitute the spiritual catharsis (purification), which was already known to St. Paul "whom," he says, speaking of someone, "I have determined to hand over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," and "among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

And again (op. cit. p. 213 ff).

Balzac, the Prophet's assistant, has taught me in *Séraphita* that Pain of conscience is a weakness which does not put an end to sin; repentance is the only power which makes a decisive end of all. Very well, let us repent. But is not that equivalent to criticising Providence, who has chosen me for its scourge? And to saying to the Powers: "You have guided my destiny ill; you have made me and commissioned me to chastise, to overthrow idols, to stir up revolt, and then you withdraw your protection from me and disown me in an absurd way, telling me to creep to the cross and repent."

Strange *circulus vitiosus*, which I already foresaw in my twentieth year, when I wrote my drama *Master Olof*, and which has constituted the tragedy of my life. Why be tormented during thirty years in order to be taught by experience what one had already foreboded. When young I was sincerely pious, and you have made me a freethinker. Out of the freethinker you have made an atheist and out of the atheist a religious man. Inspired by humanitarian ideals, I have been a herald of socialism. Five years later you showed me the absurdity of socialism; you made all my prophecies futile. And supposing I become religious once more, I am sure that in another ten years you will reduce religion to an absurdity.

At the close of *The Inferno* he writes the moral of his life's pilgrimage (op. cit. pp 228-229):

Such then is my life; a sign, an example to serve for the betterment of others; a proverb to set forth the nothingness of fame and of celebrity; a proverb to show the younger generation how they should not live; Yes! I am a proverb, I who regarded myself as a prophet and am revealed as a braggart. Now the Eternal has led this false prophet to speak empty words, and the false prophet feels irresponsible since he has only played the role assigned to him..

¹²According to Swedenborg this is the name of a stage in religious development. (Translator's note).

Here you have, my brothers, the picture of a human destiny, one among the many, and now confess that a man's life may seem—a bad joke!

V

In order to be able to understand this act of self-redemption or spiritual catharsis effected by means of this voluntary flight into semi-madness, it is necessary to take a retrospect of Strindberg's exceedingly complex life and to summarize the main points brought out in this analysis.

We started out with a child afflicted with a not inconsiderable hereditary *Belastung*, manifesting itself in organ inferiority and consequent hypertrophy of nervous function. The boy was reared under extremely adverse environmental conditions of home, school and college. From the point of view of physical and mental hygiene he suffered as much neglect as any individual could suffer.

The significance of this becomes plain if we remember his nervous predisposition and the fact that the limits of normal stimulation and response are very narrow. Dr. Burnham says (10a).

Every one of us, should we be subjected to stimuli beyond the limits, would be thrown into a state of neurosis.

We also found that the advent of puberty was attended by severe storms and stress, the intensity of which was due to the general adverse conditions already referred to, but chief of which were his fixation on the mother and consequent strained relations to his father. Dr. G. Stanley Hall says: (29) (II p. 109)

Sex, is the most potent and magic Open Sesame to the deepest mysteries of life, death, religion and love. It is, therefore, one of the cardinal sins against youth to repress healthy thoughts of sex at the proper age, because thus the mind is darkened and its wings clipped for many and the highest intuitions, which the supreme Muse of common sense at this its psychological moment ought to give. If youths are left to themselves and the contagion of most environments, this mental stimulus takes a low turn towards the lewd imaginations and vile conceptions which undermine the strength and instead of helping upward and making invulnerable against all temptations it makes virtue safe only in its absence and prepares the way for a fall when its full strength is first felt.

Now, to realize the deep significance of the above statement we need only recall certain parts of *The Son of a Servant* or the first chapter in *Married*, which is the history of Strindberg's first real struggles with life and its problems—his awakening, unguided sex-life and the violent repression of it by conditions of life over which he had no control. Out of the unsatisfactory solution of this problem originated the great majority of Strindberg's woes. From the time of his graduation from the Gymnasium in 1867 to his marriage in 1877, his love-life confirms in every respect my assumption of his psycho-sexual fixation on the mother. His early literary activities, described by himself (63 p. 110), demonstrate furthermore that he was conscious, to a certain extent, of the shackles of the Family Romance and that he made determined efforts to effect a spiritual liberation.

His youth and adolescence as well as his early manhood thus resulted in violent struggles with all the opposite forces that constitute life, foremost among which are love and religion, symbolic of his relation to the parents. He illustrates in a striking manner the genetic process of religious dualism which, according to Rank and Sachs (47) is the result of a splitting of the feelings occasioned by the contrasts of the unconscious *Einstellung* to the father—a conflict which resolves itself into the Ormuzd-Arhiman, God-Devil concept. We read (op. cit. p. 68):

The extreme expression for the overcoming of the father is atheism through which the individual comes to rely entirely upon himself and recognizes neither master nor Creator.

Along with this, however, the authors continue, the ambivalent feeling which clings to the image of the father and regards homage and gratitude to him as the first religious duty, is never absent. For the individual, the childhood relation to the father determines the attitude he assumes later towards the heavenly Father and creator of all things. Emancipation from the father and rejection of his authority does not mean rejection of or liberation from the love of and dependence on the earthly father. They are part of the Unconscious and may later find expression in religious activities. And so the circle closes. For religion, springing as it does out of the relation of the child to its parents, culminates in the end in a compromise of the ambivalent psychic impulses inherent in it.

In my former discussion of Strindberg's love life, I confined

myself almost exclusively to general statements. Before going any further it is necessary in order that we may understand more fully his domestic conflicts and his attitude towards the opposite sex in general, to remember, first that there is no such thing as unalloyed love, and secondly that qualitatively and quantitatively the philoprogenetic impulse is largely determined by the individual's filial affection for his mother. The psychology of the feelings and emotions has shown that there is no emotion known that has not its counter emotion. Stekel (55) in his instructive and interesting chapter on *Der Kampf der Geschlechter* calls attention to some of the phenomena which endocrinology now bids fair to make the sole basis of future psychology, viz., that the poisonous secretions of one set of glands are counteracted by the neutralizing secretions of other glands. This ambivalence of organic function has its innumerable analogues in the field of psychic life, and enables Stekel to make the statement that there is no love without hate and no hate without love (op. cit. p. 15).

This hate does not show itself openly until the opportune moment when it can no longer be suppressed. And so there is a continual battle between the sexes, a battle which Stekel terms the love-struggle. It begins in the family where the child observes the parents and out of these small beginnings of the Will to Power, the battle extends to every opposing force in life.

Through love the proper mixture of the sensual and the spiritual elements surrenders to the object of its activity. Yet not even in this case are we entitled to look upon the personal element as completely ruled out. It is only forced down below the threshold of consciousness. From out of this prison house it watches for shortcomings in the love object and finally breaks out in open rebellion against the suppressing force in power. There is the same rhythmic rise and fall in the emotional life as that which manifests itself everywhere in cosmic phenomena.

This is the beginning then of the quiet battle of sex and in it there is no compromise, only the question of *either—or*. Says Stekel (55):

Hammer or anvil, that is the great question of wedlock. In wedlock hatred finds new sustenance because the strongest impulse of the human being—his Will to Power—is really nothing else than his instinct of independence.

Personal freedom is the greatest ideal of man. At heart

every individual that is at all alive is an anarchist and rebels unconsciously, if not consciously, against the limitations that a life of culture puts upon him. After hundreds and thousands of years of training, man is still an animal that may be trained but never completely tamed. To comply with the demands of cultural life is a sacrifice. Through marriage man renounces his incestuous and polygamous instincts in favor of a single woman. Consciously man does this willingly, we are told, but unconsciously bitter feelings are born because of this sacrifice of personality, the shackling, smothering and partial stamping out of the ego.

A happy marriage is unthinkable except where one of the contrahents is completely vanquished, or where both parties have descended to a level of pathological indifference and vegetation. Marriages fail, according to Stekel, because the contrahents are too self-centered, too narcissistic, in other words neither one of the two will become subordinate to the other. He who is madly in love identifies himself with the object of his love. He who simply loves is still conscious of a part of his own ego. Love marriages are, therefore, not necessarily happy, for love and marriage are different things.

This philosophy of love, formulated by Stekel on strictly Adlerian principles, is the key to the understanding of Strindberg's vicissitudinous conjugal life. Already in 1887 he wrote in *A Fool's Confession* with reference to his first wife (60 p. 338):

I hate her because I love her.

That Strindberg's attitude towards the opposite sex was largely determined by his psycho-sexual fixation on the mother has been recognized even by writers who have not publicly identified themselves with any one of the psycho-analytic theories. Lind-af-Hageby (40 p. 22) says with reference to Strindberg:

The mother soon became an object of analysis; he was torn between love for her and contempt for her faults which he discovered through making comparisons between her and his father.

This is correct so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It is necessary to amplify the statement as follows: On the one hand she was the flawless mother, the source of love and consolation to whom the child gravitated. But later on she also became the sensual, impure woman, who had violated both laws and conventions and so to speak became the concubine of his

father. Theoretically, he was born in wedlock, but practically he was an illegitimate child. Moreover, he had another serious grievance against her. He owed his slave blood to her and those traits of servility and lack of individuality which intensify his consciousness of social inferiority.

His fanatical, highly abnormal idealization of woman, marriage, motherhood and the family is but a defence mechanism against his conscious and unconscious condemnation of his own parents, an over compensation for the inherent defects in his first and last love object—his own mother. The dualistic image of his mother in which the baser component continually threatened to become the dominant element conditioned Strindberg's attitude towards the opposite sex. It probably also created in him that puritanic worship of virtue which manifested itself in an extreme shyness during his youth and adolescence. There are many instances of this in his autobiographical writings. The hired girl who uncovered him while he was asleep he horse-whipped on the following day when told about it (69, p. 152). The maid (Karin) whom he found playing in a suspicious manner with a younger brother while the latter was in bed he spat in the face and defied both the father and the stepmother in the altercations that followed, for, as he said, he felt that he represented the dead mother.

The dialogue between the father and the son concerning this incident I shall not attempt to interpret. But I venture to say that a very special meaning must be attached to it.

All this sensitiveness of his Strindberg regarded as a natural endowment. From a psycho-analytic point of view it is a force of repression and hence but a defence mechanism against what was uppermost in his unconscious, threatening to break through and establish itself in consciousness. Ultimately there developed out of this trait in Strindberg this doctrine (8).

that social and individual purity is the only solid foundation for physical and mental health, as well as an indispensable condition of true achievement.

The Madonna cult which began in his childhood and which outlived his misogyny must also be traced to the same source—the mother. It was nothing but another form of over compensation. After his first marriage, however, it came to an abrupt end, and a considerable part of his so-called Romantic period and all of his Naturalistic period are permeated with that hatred

of woman, that general misanthropy and spiritual darkness which culminates in and subsides, generally speaking, about the time of his divorce from the first wife and his entrance upon the road to Inferno.

Since I have already discussed in detail the various circumstances and factors, the interplay of which finally resulted in the unhappy union between Strindberg and the divorced Baroness, nothing further need be said. It is plain that Strindberg's fate—his *Inzestscheu*—forced him to marry, not the maternal type of woman, but its very opposite. We should, however, not forget that there were other motives as I have previously pointed out in detail. How violently he struggled against the realization of the union I have emphasized and demonstrated by excerpts from *A Fool's Confession*. A reading of the entire work will relieve anyone of the doubt as to the validity of my statement. The fact also that the Baroness was a native of Finland, that Strindberg's second wife, Frida Uhl, was an Austrian and the third, Harriet Bosse was a Norwegian, gains special significance in consideration of the fact that Abraham (3 p. 499 ff) thinks there is a type of neurotics who has special difficulty in establishing relations with the opposite sex. He terms this type *exogamous*. The difficulty consists in this, namely, that the man experiences an ungovernable antipathy at coming in contact with a woman that belongs to the same race or nationality as he himself, or rather that of his mother. This Abraham regards as a positive defence mechanism against incest. The neurotic flees from the maternal type to such women who are most unlike the mother (or sister) in appearance and character. He reports that blond North-German neurotics show great antipathy towards the same type of women. Nothing in their wives must remind them of their original love—the mother. Not even their home dialect. They are attracted by foreign brunettes. Dr. Abraham has found an abundance of such examples and is inclined to think that this type of neurotic makes his selection according to a definite law. In all this the inclination to *Reihenbildung*, emphasized by Freud, was most striking. The patient showed himself unable to direct his libido permanently or successfully to a particular woman. The fixation on the earliest love was over-powering.

Be this as it may, one thing is certain and that is that the Baroness embodied none of those traits which Strindberg admired in his own mother, that is the truly womanly qualities, but many of those qualities which he abhorred in his own mother. This

statement will be plain to anyone who will take the trouble to read *A Fool's Confession*, which I have accepted as a fair and essentially trustworthy characterization of the woman, even if somewhat overdrawn here and there, perhaps throughout. And so it came to pass that Strindberg found in his much longed for complement an agent who continually revived in him the memories of the serious shortcomings of his own mother and caused him to transfer all his unconscious hatred of and contempt for her on his own wife and womankind at large in so far as it did not correspond to the idealized image of his mother. To what extent he identified himself with his father and the Baroness with his mother is impossible to say, but to an individual so utterly at the mercy of auto-suggestion as Strindberg was, such feats would not be difficult of execution.

At any rate his unceasing rhythmic vacillation between love and hate, hope and fear, the joy of life with its hard battles on the one hand and sickness, poverty, and thoughts of suicide on the other finally resulted in the severing of the conjugal bond.

I have already pointed out that the so-called Inferno crisis was the logical outcome of a life that could not run any longer in the old ruts. Shortly after his arrival in Berlin in 1892, he had come under the influence of Swedenborg and theosophy. The scientific studies which he then undertook, undoubtedly in order to stifle the small voice from within, soon convinced him of the limitations of the human mind and the vanity, the presumptuousness of wishing to arrive at positive proofs concerning the phenomena of life. Truth, that treasure of which he had been in quest since his childhood, was not to be found. The limitations of the human mind now for the first time became an irrefutable reality to him and at the same time a good and wholly justifiable excuse for beating that retreat which his pride and boundless ambition had postponed for years. In other words, his fictitious goal was unattainable and his safety at stake. In one way and in one only, could he burn the remaining bridges and turn a seemingly disastrous defeat into a glorious victory—the greatest one of which the human being is capable. This was by proclaiming to the world the *Vanitas Vanitatum* of Ecclesiastes. And he did it. His scientific studies had degenerated into alchemy and from out of this atmosphere there was but a single step into absolute mysticism and occultism. He took the step. And from out of "sorrow, despair, darkness and absolute skepticism," he began his Inferno wandering by way of Damascus to the Cross.

This pilgrimage of his is described in the mystic symbolic dramas entitled *To Damascus*. This dramatic trilogy reveals to us the soul's final battle with self and the devil—the past with all its vanity and sorrow—and the final renouncement of the world. Here he bows before and embraces that faith in God which he had combatted in his youth, and endeavored to eradicate entirely from his life in after years. Here we become acquainted with the Stranger and the Lady who journey together from place to place in suffering and disillusionment, tortured by violent, corroding hatred or solaced by ecstatic love. Finally the Stranger attains to perfect peace, that "peace which passeth all understanding," in the monastery of dead passions, the white mansion on the top of the hill which he greets with the following words:

Anything so white I never before beheld on this unclean earth, except in my dreams; yes, this is my youth's dream of a house wherein dwelled peace and purity. I greet thee white house . . . Now I am at home.

In this play Strindberg's whole stormy life, symbolically masked, passes in review. Here are found pall-mall The Beggar, The Doctor, The Sister, The Mother, The Confessor, The Fool, The Shadows—all but one and the same individuality in different disguise. With the cross in his hand—the symbol of salvation, snatched from a roadside *calvaire*—The Stranger advances higher and higher towards the sky. But he falls and is found in a state of delirium by some of the inmates of the monastery who bring him to the hospital. After he emerges from the trance he finds himself seated in the Refectory in company with all those whom he has injured in life and with whom his own fate has in some way been bound up. The dominant note of the whole scene is one of overwhelming guilt—that guilt which like a red thread runs through Strindberg's entire life. The Confessor reads aloud The Curse of Deuteronomy and every word cuts the Stranger to the quick, making him feel the whole crushing weight of the Law, but he suffers it all in resignation for he has reached the rock-bottom of life and accomplished his self redemption—the spiritual deliverance from all those passions which bound him to the past.

This deliverance is the subject of a large number of plays which, generally speaking, resemble *To Damascus* in thought, contents and dramatic construction. Such are among others *Advent*, *Easter*, *The Dance of Death* and *The Dream Play*, which

Lind-af-Hageby has characterized as "a new conception and a new art . . . a play written for a stage not yet built." (40 p. 315).

Strindberg calls *The Dream Play* a Buddhistic and proto-Christian drama. It is more than that, says Lind-af-Hageby, it is pre-cosmic.

The *Blue Book (Zones of the Spirit)*, constitute, according to Strindberg himself the synthesis of his life. Of this remarkable work Nils Kjaer wrote in *Verdens Gang*:

It is more comprehensive than any modern collection of aphorisms, chaotic as the Koran, wrathful as Isaiah, as full of occult things as the Bible, more entertaining than any novel, keener-edged than most pamphlets, mystical as the Cabbala, subtle as the scholastic theology, sincere as Rousseau's confessions, stamped with the impress of incomparable originality, every sentence shining like luminous letters in the darkness—such is this book in which the remarkable writer makes a final reckoning with his time and proclaims his fate, as pugnaciously as though he were a descendant of the Hero of Lützen.¹³

To this admirable characterization of the book I would add that taken all in all it is an apology for his conversion to the new life. Like many of his works of the post-Inferno period it is a safety and defence mechanism. This is evident from the way in which he cites precedents from history, ancient and modern. A large number of great men, poets and philosophers grew wise like himself in old age and became mystics. He has, therefore, lost nothing by renouncing his former self with all its worldly vanity and foolish speculations inspired by the arch-enemy of man—the devil—but made positive gains; he has written to the very summit of the Alpine regions of pure life and communication with God, whence his way led onward to the verdant plains and the calm waters of Felicity. From this commanding height he surveyed the world below where he formerly dwelt and the landscape is alternately lit up with sunshine or draped in dark mists or drowned in rainstorms. But he, the poet, the redeemed one, who has been snatched, as it were, from the jaws of death, has escaped alike from dark and bright days. He is above it all, reconciled with Fate and the past.

But Strindberg's faith was far from that of the ordinary orthodox Christian. He writes (70 p. 113):

¹³Quoted by Babillotte in his introduction to *Zones of the Spirit*.

Let the fruit of faith be seen to be Humanity, Resignation, Mercifulness. But don't go and count how many glasses of whiskey your neighbor drinks; don't call him a hypocrite if once in a while he gives way to the flesh, or if he is angry and says hard words. Don't ask how often he goes to church; don't spy on his words, if in an access of ill-humor he speaks otherwise than he would . . . a white lie or an embellishment of a story is not a deadly sin. An impropriety can be so atoned for by imprisonment that it ought to be forgotten. Don't secede from church because you do not understand some dogma. Do not form a sect with the idea of raising yourself to the rank of Shepherd . . . One should have a large-hearted Christianity for daily use and a stricter one for festivals.

Again he shows his independence and originality in the following excerpt (op. cit.).

It is my duty to fight for the maintenance of my ego against all influences which a sect or party, from love of proselytizing might bring to bear upon it. The conscience which the grace of my Divine Protector has given me, tells me that.

Hence it is perfectly safe as well as just to maintain that in the last analysis, Strindberg's egotism transcended his spirituality.

Bjerre (7) voicing the theory of Adler is, therefore, essentially correct. Strindberg's conversion was, as I have already pointed out, to a large degree a strategic retreat, a compromise, a necessary *modus vivendi*, conditioned in part at least, by his inability as a neurotic to accept enigmatic problems of existence in a pragmatic spirit. Hence his flight into alchemy, magics, mysticism and occultism and then to the Cross, the everlasting symbol, as Bjerre said, of the inability on the part of the individual to cope with and master the problems of earthly life.

To Strindberg God became the greatest of all realities. To try to prove his existence was as foolish as to endeavor to prove a geometrical axiom. The men of science are rustic intelligences who confound intelligence with reason and whose discourses upon things spiritual are worthless (70 p. 1).

The consequence of ambition and of learning he characterizes as follows (op. cit. p. 250):

As soon as a man buries himself in books he gets black nails and dirty cuffs, forgets to wash, to comb his hair and to shave. He neglects his duties towards life, society and man; loses spiritual capacities, becomes absent-minded, short-sighted, wears glasses and takes snuff to keep himself awake. He cannot follow a conversation with attention, can-

not interest himself in other people's affairs, does not see the face of the earth by day nor the stars by night. Behind his desire to investigate lies the insidious ambition to master his material, to become an authority, to tyrannize, to make a career for himself and to receive distinctions.

But despite all his ingenious defence mechanism and pretended serenity of soul, he was most intimately attached to the memories of his past life with all its pains and disasters. As an example of this I refer to a few jottings entitled *In the Attic* (op. cit. p. 285 ff), the gist of which is as follows: Three years had passed since his marriage and now the storm had carried away all—his wife and child. One day he had occasion to go up into the attic. Here in the viscera of the house he found himself in the midst of the flotsam and jetsam of the wreck. There was the canopy of the marriage bed, the cradle, the milk bottle which she had washed with her small hands, there were the flower vases and withered flowers that came on the eve of their wedding, dried up bouquets and laurel wreaths, pieces of furniture belonging to the bride.

His eyes fell on a toy cupboard. It made him think of Christmas and of the beaming eyes of a child; it made him think of little milk teeth, a rocking-horse and dolls. He opened the toy cupboard. It contained a miniature phonograph which could utter but a single word. He wound it up. It hummed like a bee and then whispered the only word it knew: *Darling*. It was *her* voice. She had spoken it into the phonograph, but he had forgotten it. *Darling*. He cried to God; he raged against Fate; he fell to the ground. As he lay there he could only lament:

If only they were dead. If . . .

For they were not dead. They lived. That was the thing which could not be altered nor atoned for, and all these things were not relics. They were the flotsam and the jetsam of the wreck.

In such hours of extreme psychic suffering among the floating wreckage of his long, turbulent life, he found solace in the memories of the distant past. Like *Jubal without an Ego*,¹ he then renounced the fruitless search for his real, lost self, at least where it could not be found:

¹ Sagor. Stokholm, Hugo Gebers Förlag, 1909. 154 p.

and like all weary men he was seized with a longing for his life's origin—his mother.

In the little hut in the highlands he found her. A miracle was wrought by a single word. No sooner had she pronounced his name than

he was transformed into his former self. All his roles of kings, of demons, of maëstros and models went up in smoke and he was only one thing—his mother's son.

Then once more he knelt before her, gently laid his head in her lap and whispered:

I have had enough of life. Now I long to die.

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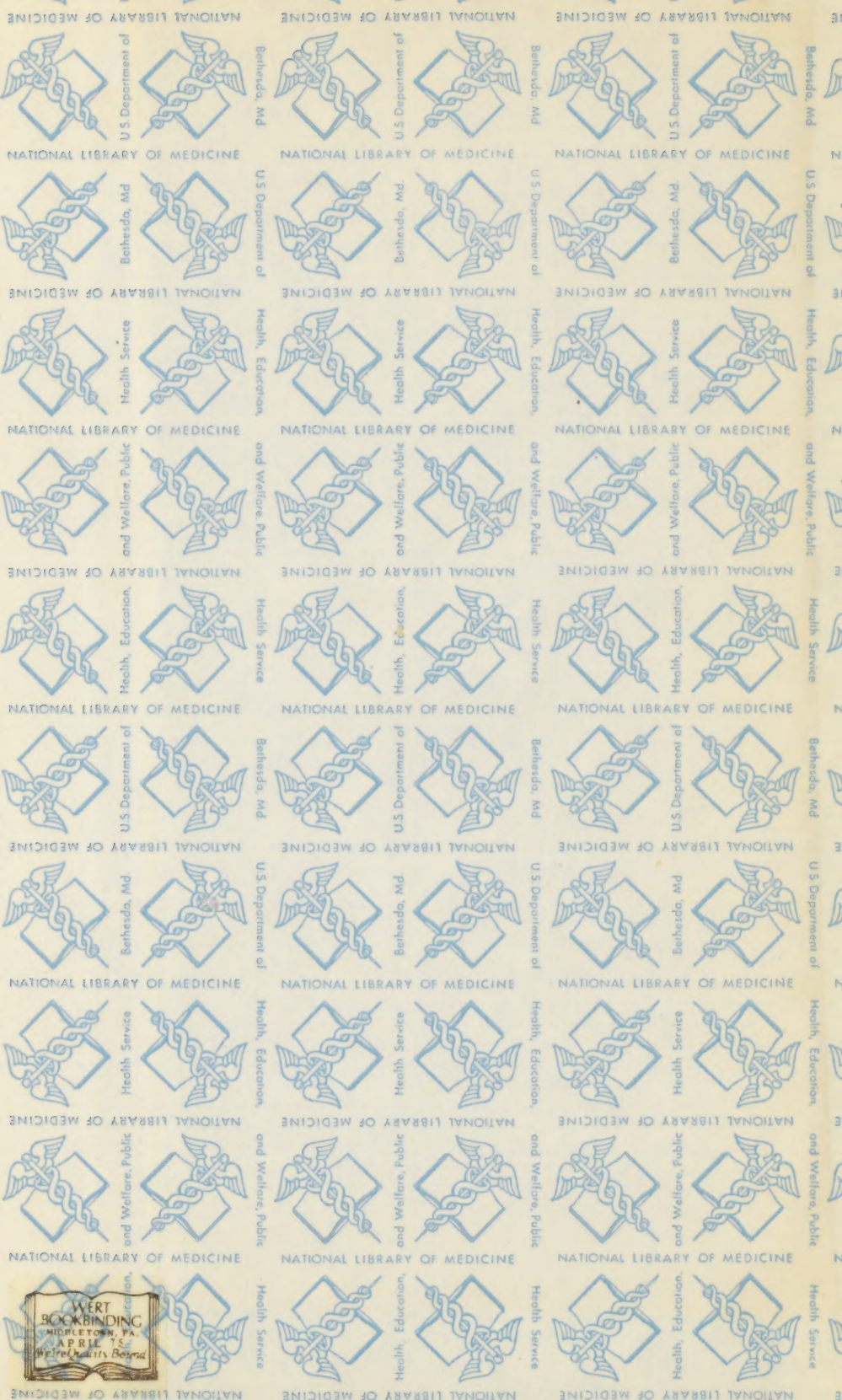
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